

Summer 2020



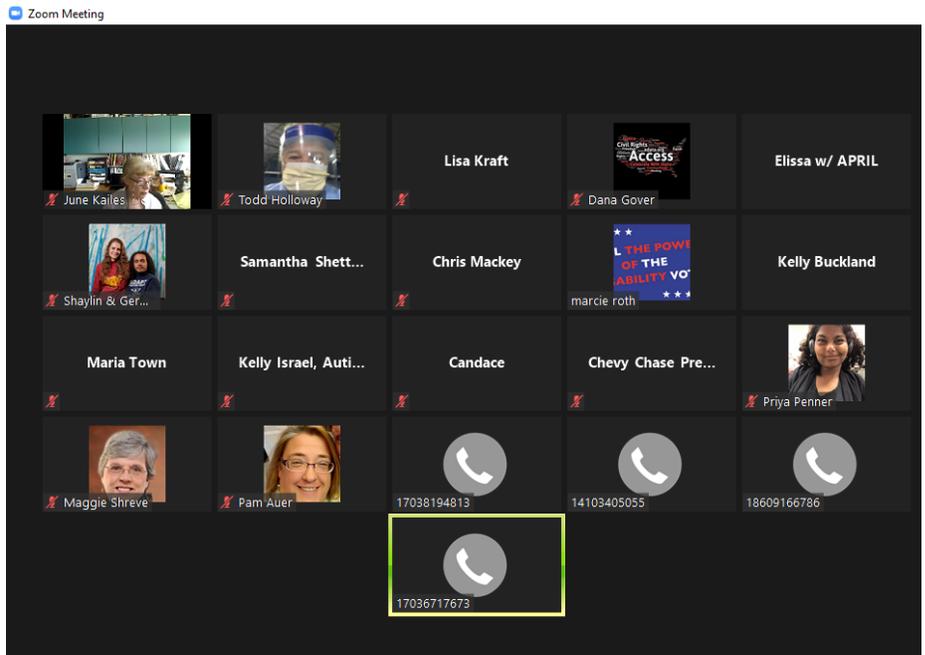
# CIEP ALERT



A Publication by the  
**COALITION ON INCLUSIVE EMERGENCY PLANNING**  
 a program of the Washington State Independent Living Council

## COVID-19 CONNECTS CIEP COMMUNITY

As the coronavirus pandemic sweeps the country, many states vary widely in their response to enhanced public health recommendations. Basically, these protocols include face coverings, social distancing, and personal hygiene. In Washington State, our Governor Jay Inslee sets his mandates based upon consultation with health officials around the state, especially our Department of Health (DOH). (Notice of transparency: CIEP receives its funding from DOH.)



*A Zoom meeting hosted by the NCIL Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee.  
 Credit: Todd Holloway*

Among our CIEP stakeholders, which includes community advocates on the ground, local city and county emergency management and health jurisdictions, state agencies, a lot of attention has been turned to the diversity, inclusion and equity of not just people with disabilities, but also the intersectionality of disability and the Black, Brown, Indigenous, and People Of Color communities, or the BIPOC community. In this case, we look for people with some type of disability in these disenfranchised population groups that have been disproportionately impacted by disasters and public health crises as well as racism and ableism. We do need to acknowledge here that accurate demographics on the disability population is hard to come by because as there is no effective way to collect this type of data in Washington.

The pandemic has not only exposed many challenges and shortfalls in meeting our access and functional needs, but also created opportunities for collaboration and best practices. Before the stay-at-home orders, CIEP hosted four Networking Meetings each year. Since the onset of the public health emergency, our coalition began to meet

virtually each week, and then currently biweekly using the Zoom videoconferencing platform with ASL interpreters and CART transcripts. Notes were taken from the transcript of each meeting and sent out to participants and stakeholders throughout the State of Washington. As we learn about the profound effects induced during the pandemic, we record each issue, and connect people who seek resources and technical assistance.

Our CIEP meetings are active forums for situational awareness. Stakeholders with disabilities and advocates report out on best practices and shortfalls that they encounter. Emergency management professionals who support our Access and Functional Needs give us situational awareness. Sometimes we become aware of potential gaps that only those with “accessibility lenses” can detect early on. The outcome of CIEP’s involvement with other emergency workers lead to better planning as a byproduct from our discussions.

During our meetings, CIEP has kept a running log of success stories as a result of increased collaboration between disability advocates and emergency management/public health officials. While federal funding within the CARES Act spurred a lot of this interaction, we hope that many of these positive changes will remain permanent.

Using the power of virtual networking, the online CIEP meetings keep us in touch with our allies in emergency management, public health, non-government disaster relief organizations, disability service agencies, centers for independent living, and individual advocates. The stakeholders are always ready to offer resources, technical advice, and tips to help people navigate the system. The CIEP network is multi-level with voices from the street, up to the city and county levels, and also the tribal and state

governments, and finally federal officials. We have averaged about 30 to 45 attendees at each meeting.

Our online collaboration during the COVID-19 emergency brought together the deafblind community with emergency planners in Seattle and King County. Early on, Debra Viser Kahn, President of the Washington State DeafBlind Citizens (WSDBC), an organization that promotes leadership, independence, and communication access of deafblind individuals. The COVID mandates on face coverings and social distancing imposed an undue strain on the quality of life for most WSDBC members, who rely primarily on close-up or tactile sign language. Their form of effective communications is vital to their health and well-being. Due to its highly acclaimed public transportation network and accessible service agencies, Seattle is home to



**2020** Disasters Don't Wait.  
**MAKE YOUR PLAN TODAY.**



Debra Viser Kahn, President of the Washington State DeafBlind Citizens

Continued from Page 2

one of the largest deafblind populations in the United States. CIEP brought together accessibility advocates from the DeafBlind Service Center, the Alliance of People with Disabilities, The Arc of King County, and the Northwest ADA Center to develop plans for effective communications at public testing sites and other services.

The pandemic brings about additional challenges when there are concurrent disasters. The Central Washington Disability Resources, a center for independent living in Ellensburg was facing a pandemic outbreak and wildfires in a nearby county. Joshua Hackney, the Youth Transition Coordinator met with the leaders of the Yakima County Emergency Management, and showed him how to connect with the disability community impacted by the twin disasters. This started a new wave of awareness of access and functional needs among local emergency management.



Joshua Hackney, Youth Transition Coordinator at Central Washington Disability Resources in Ellensburg

A small cadre of CIEP stakeholders stood up briefly to monitor another wildfire in Okanogan County that was threatening 200 homes, and the American Red Cross was deployed to oversee shelter operations. New social distancing protocols require shelter providers to use individual rooms in hotels, dormitories and similar venues instead of congregate shelters. Fortunately, this fire was quickly contained.

Our stakeholders are also involved in a number of other activities. We also work with state agencies and commissions to ensure that their policies are inclusive and respect the full diversity of our citizens in Washington. CIEP appreciates this ongoing collaboration with our many partners during the past several months. To become a CIEP Stakeholder and participate in the different activities, please contact Jim House.

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 these areas: 1) Effective communications, 2) Programmatic Access, and 3) Physical Access. We welcome any suggestions for future issues of the CIEP ALERT quarterly newsletter. Past issues since 2018 are available at <https://www.wasilc.org/newsletter>.

## Contact CIEP:

**Jim House, Disability Integration Manager**  
**Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Planning (CIEP)**  
**a program of the Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC)**

office: 360.339.7435

text: 360.338.5114

fax: 360.407.3899

toll-free: 800.624.4105

email: [Jim.House@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:Jim.House@dshs.wa.gov)

[www.wasilc.org/coalition-on-inclusive-emergency-planning](http://www.wasilc.org/coalition-on-inclusive-emergency-planning)

visit: 4565 7<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, Lacey WA 98503

mail: PO Box 45343, Olympia WA 98504-5343

# ACCESS & FUNCTIONAL NEEDS RESOURCES

WA State Independent Living Council—COVID-19 Resource Page

<https://www.wasilc.org/post/novel-coronavirus-covid-19>

WA State Department of Commerce Drive-in WiFi Hotspots Location Finder

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/building-infrastructure/washington-state-drive-in-wifi-hotspots-location-finder/>

WA Emergency Management Division—Disaster Ready Washington

<https://mil.wa.gov/preparedness?fbclid=IwAR28YOxqRCOh4YmivjJ3EAmr7ufac1ZWo6Og4Xtqpq4Uc0nfvcnRS80GUB>

WA Emergency Management Division—Alert & Notification Warnings listed by County

<https://mil.wa.gov/alerts?fbclid=IwAR0d22Yjf-NmWsYbUTd-YMREr399BWzpozDYcSlup7QWV-86BQJkuHUUusj>

WA State Local Emergency Management Agencies listed by County

<https://www.ready.gov/washington>

WA State Local Health Jurisdictions (LHJ) listed by City/County

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/AboutUs/PublicHealthSystem/LocalHealthJurisdictions>

WA State Department of Ecology – Emergency Planning Committees listed by County

<https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Reporting-requirements/Emergency-Planning-Community-Right-to-Know-Act/Local-Emergency-Planning-Committees#o>

## 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](mailto: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 Quarterly Meetings](#)

**WHEN:** Thursday 10/1/2020: 9:00am - 4:00pm

**WHERE:** Zoom —Email [Jolie.Ramsey@dshs.wa.gov](mailto: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 in September.

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 above at least two weeks or as early as possible prior to the meeting to ensure availability.

[September 2020 is National Preparedness Month—Disasters Don't Wait, Plan Today!!!](#)

[Washington Statewide Partners in Disaster Strategies Conference](#)

**WHEN:** Last week in October 2020—Dates TBD

**WHERE:** Zoom — Email [Jim.House@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:Jim.House@dshs.wa.gov) for details.

