CIEP ALERT HITS FIVE YEARS!

The Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Planning (CIEP) and Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC) are celebrating five years of the CIEP ALERT newsletter with a new look and more accessible features. The new mast head pays homage to the CMIST framework that guides our leadership in equitable emergency planning not just for people with disabilities, but also those who have other Access and Functional Needs (AFN).

The first letter, C characterizes Communication (text bubbles in circle #1) involving those who have a preference in communicating and receiving emergency notifications in a language other than English, and in alternative formats. Secondly, M means Maintaining Health (pills in circle #2) to ensure that people continue to have access to their medication and reduce unnecessary hospitalization and institutionalization. The third letter I illustrates Independence (wheelchair in circle #3) where people with disabilities can travel anywhere they wish to go, even within shelters. The fourth letter S signifies Support & Security (silhouette of three people with a hand underneath in circle #4) to
provide essential services to help them cope with disasters and their aftermath. Lastly, T illustrates Transportation (vehicle in circle #5) which is the final component that not only ensures accessible vehicles, but also provides mobility for evacuation or vital transportation to critical life sustaining medical treatments.

TRACEY’S VISION FOR AFN IN WASHINGTON

Tracey Singh is our new Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Program Manager for Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD). Tracey comes with experience as the Divisional Disability Integration Advisor for the American Red Cross.

CIEP has been a major influence in advocating for an AFN Program Manager at EMD.
WASILC hosted a two-day virtual conference in November 2020, where CIEP and the Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies (PIDS) and national advocates presented the case for a state-level AFN position. Then WASILC submitted a White Paper to EMD during the summer of 2021 listing the findings from the conference. That White Paper was included with a budget request for the 2022 Legislature to fund this position. Tracey was hired last fall, and she has hit the ground running. We are pleased for this opportunity to interview Tracey about AFN priorities for 2023.

CIEP: I understand you were with the Red Cross disability integration program. How did you select this field?

Tracey: Yes, I support the Pacific Division Disability Integration team which includes Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, and all the Pacific Islands. After joining the Red Cross 4 years ago, a member of the leadership team learned that my background as a Special Education Teacher and Administrator I had some knowledge that may be useful. She referred me to check into the program. I was able to work through the program and then eventually was promoted to the Divisional advisor position. Growing up in a household with a parent and sibling both with AFN needs I have always been a advocate that the world’s mindset needs to change sharply.

CIEP: Have you personally experienced a disaster, what was it like?

Tracey: Yes, I have been involved in the California Wildfires in 2020
and 2021. Having experience working with the Red Cross had me have a little bit better prepared. My house was evacuated twice, and we were the fortunate ones that were able to return home but waiting and watching the fires move and grow is a very traumatic situation. The confusion, stress and overall panic that comes with these events cannot be explained but truly makes the importance of my work show.

CIEP: Knowing that the ADA and other accessibility laws and regulations remain in full effect during disasters, what gaps have you seen in the field of emergency planning?

Tracey: The thing that I noticed the most is that planning is lacking in most areas. I often see that our ability to adequately and timely secure ADA compliant facilities and resources is lacking greatly. Many times, we wait for days, weeks and even longer for a shower, restroom, laundry that is ADA complaint. People at times have to be bussed or moved to other places to be able to use these types of facilities. Another big one is the availability of services such as interpreters, personal care attendants, durable medical equipment and knowing who the sources are and how they can partner with other sources to get these services in a timely matter.

CIEP: What are some of the best practices have you noticed in inclusive emergency planning around Washington?

Tracey: For me the biggest thing I see in the State of Washington is that there are many different agencies that are supporting the
residents of Washington no matter what their needs are. Continuing to build up these alliances and partnerships is the best thing we can do together. Washington has some large advocacy going on that is making sure that we are servicing the Whole Community and that all citizens are heard. As we continue to develop and grow it is exciting to know how we can make Washington shine.

CIEP: Now that you have been with EMD for a few months, what priorities do you envision for 2023 and beyond for AFN and its impact on stakeholders across the state?

Tracey: My mission is to make AFN a part of all we do at EMD from the beginning. This includes from planning onward. The big goal is that all stakeholders across the state be included in all we do. This means that we will make sure that we are reaching out to stakeholders throughout Washington State as our subject matter experts to give input on what is going on in the state. We have a lot of development to go to get there but it is headed in the right direction.

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WASHINGTON STATE / REGIONAL AFN RESOURCES

- AFN Acronym List for Interpreters and Captioners
- CIEP ALERT and WASILC Newsletter back issues (to 2018)
- CIEP / WASILC Resource Library
- CIEP Cascadia Subduction Zone TTX After Action Report
- City or County Local Health Jurisdictions (LHJs)
- County Emergency Management Agencies
- County Emergency Planning Committees
- Disability Organizations | Washington Department of Health
- Emergency & Disaster Response Lessons Learned (NW ADA)
- Functional Assessment Service Teams (FAST) | Pierce County

NATIONWIDE AFN RESOURCES

- American Red Cross Inclusivity Preparedness Resources
- ADA Guide: Accessible Emergency Preparedness & Response
- CDC Disability and Health Emergency Preparedness
- Disabilities/Access & Functional Needs|DisasterAssistance.gov
- FEMA | PHE Functional Needs Support Services Guidance
- HHS | TRACIE Topic Collection: Access and Functional Needs
- Inclusive Emergency Lifelines | Wireless Inclusive RERC
- Individuals with Disabilities | Ready.gov
- Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies
COMING EVENTS:

CIEP Stakeholder Calls (AFN Response to Disasters)
WHERE: Monthly on first Wednesday at 10:00-11:00 am.
WHERE: Zoom link for monthly calls thru December 2023. Email Jim.House@dshs.wa.gov for details and agenda.

Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC) Quarterly Meetings
WHERE: Thursday, April 6, 2023 10am to 2:45pm
WHERE: Disability Empowerment Center—Seattle/Remote Zoom option available — Email WASILC@dshs.wa.gov for details.

All CIEP Stakeholder Calls and WASILC Quarterly Meetings are open to everyone. ASL interpreters and CART will be provided. For other reasonable accommodation requests, please email us as early as possible.

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.

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