

Notice from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, FEMA Office of Equal Rights, and FEMA Office of Disability Integration & Coordination

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reminds its recipients of federal financial assistance that are engaged in emergency management (e.g., state and local emergency management agencies, other recipients) and their subrecipients of federal funds, of their obligations to ensure that individuals and communities affected by disasters do not face unlawful discrimination in the provision of federally assisted services to disaster survivors. On August 16, 2016, four federal agencies, including DHS, issued the [*Guidance to State and Local Governments and Other Federally Assisted Recipients Engaged in Emergency Preparedness, Response, Mitigation, and Recovery Activities on Compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.*](#) See the [Press Release](#).

In addition to practices for ensuring nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin (including limited English proficiency), the guidance includes resources related to affirmative requirements for ensuring nondiscrimination for individuals with disabilities.

Under federal civil rights laws, sheltering services and facilities must be accessible to children and adults with disabilities. Sheltering and temporary housing of persons with disabilities must take place in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the person, which in most cases is the same setting people without disabilities enjoy. See, [*Guidance on Planning for Integration of Functional Needs Support Services in General Population.*](#) The intent of this federal guidance is to ensure that individuals are provided appropriate accommodations and are not turned away or moved from general population shelters and temporary housing or inappropriately placed in other, more restrictive, environments (e.g., “special needs” shelters, institutions, nursing homes, and hotels and motels disconnected from other support services).

Recipients are also reminded to take steps to ensure effective communication with impacted populations during response and recovery activities. See, [*Tips for Effectively Communicating with Protected Populations During Preparedness, Response, and Recovery.*](#) For individuals with disabilities, effective communication access means communication with people with disabilities that is as equally effective as communication with people without disabilities. This includes, but is not limited to, providing print materials in large print and Braille, website accessibility, open captioning of videos, and qualified sign language interpreters.

For more information, to request technical assistance, or to report concerns, contact:

Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
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Office of Equal Rights
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
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<http://www.fema.gov/office-equal-rights>

Office of Disability Integration & Coordination
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