



Access and Functional Needs Advisory Committee Minutes

Date: January 26, 2022

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM.

Roll Call

The following individuals are present via a virtual meeting hosted on WebEx:

Alicia Tate-Nadeau, Jennifer March, Scott Gauvin, Karl Schmitt, Eric Lorenz, Anu Meka, Tyler Woodard, John Eckert, David Kuriniec, Judith Levitan, Kira Meskin, Laura VanPuymbrouck, Tom Wilson, Jae Jin Pak, Ashley Murphy, Barbara Pritchard, Megan Norlin, Todd Roach, Harold Damon, Allison Anderson, Randy D. Colón, Karen Tamley, Shelly Richardson, Pam Heavens, Donna Brandis Ehler, Dorothy Cox-Stowe, DeAnna Clark,

Welcome and Introductions

Director Tate-Nadeau (IEMA)

- The role of emergency management means that we must make sure we are meeting the needs of our entire population in Illinois.
- Karen Tamley and I worked together in a prior role, and she introduced me to the best practices related to Access and Functional Needs planning.
- This committee is being formed to help us make sure we move forward correctly.

Karen Tamley

- I served for 14 years as the commissioner for the Chicago Mayor's Office for people with disabilities, during the time that Director Tate-Nadeau worked as the Executive Director for the Chicago Office of Emergency Management.
- We worked a lot on the city's emergency operations plans to make that disabled people were included in all aspects, throughout the entire plan.
- One of the important things about the work that Chicago did was that they included actual disabled people and not able-bodied people that were posing as disabled people for exercises and training.

Director Tate-Nadeau (IEMA)

- Karen will act as an advisor to us in a non-voting capacity.



IEMA

- I intend to take some of the things that Karen and I worked on in Chicago and see if we can expand those into greater Illinois.

Jennifer March (IEMA)

- Let's start with some introductions. Anu, can you start us off?

Anu Meka (IDPH)

- I am IDPH's Emergency Response Coordinator for the Springfield Region, which includes 14 counties.
- Independence services and response to functional needs are part of our CDC deliverables, so I'm here to learn and contribute to whatever is needed.

John Eckert (IDoA)

- I am the Division Manager of Planning, Research, and Development at the Illinois Department on Aging.
- My primary function is to work with persons who are elderly, so close to 100,000 people who utilize community services.

David Kuriniec (IDHS)

- I am the Bureau Chief from the Home Services Program within the Division of Rehabilitation Services at IDHS.
- We serve approximately 30,000 customers with disabilities across the state, to keep folks in their own homes rather than in long-term care settings.

Scott Gauvin (IEMA)

- I am the Manager of Strategic Operations and Preparedness for the Illinois Emergency Management Agency; what that means is I am the agency's chief planner.
- My job is to run our Inter-Agency Strategic Planning Cell, which is multi-discipline and multi-agency.

Judith Levitan (OIAG)

- I am the Chief of the Disability Rights Bureau at the Illinois Attorney General's Office.
- I work with all disabilities in the State of Illinois, but the Attorney General's Office has exclusive enforcement authority over environmental barriers.
- We have provided technical assistance in the past to the Red Cross and to other organizations that provide emergency shelters, and I am excited to bring that experience to this committee.

Jennifer March (IEMA)



- Thanks, everyone. I am happy to talk about the bill, but I feel Kira could give a good overview of how this bill came to be since she was so instrumental in its creation. Kira?

Senate Bill 921 Background and Intent

Kira Meskin

- Hi, my pronouns are (she, her) I would be happy to give an overview.
- I am one of the co-leaders of the PPE for People with Disabilities Coalition. We have another co-leader here as well – Laura VanPuymbrouck – as well as a couple of our other members – Tom Wilson and Jae Jin.
- Our work originally focused on accessing and distributing personal protective equipment (PPE) to Chicago-area residents with disabilities and their caregivers using home- and community-based services.
- We developed a needs assessment survey to understand what their issues were, and to figure out how to provide individualized packages for everyone.
- While our coalition has focused on serving people who live in the Chicago area, several us from the coalition – including myself – have also advocated on behalf of people residing in nursing homes, long-term care facilities, and institutions.
- We witnessed many barriers in these residential facilities as well, which pushed our work beyond the issue of disability.
- While we were addressing these issues, we began to wonder how the state agencies were involved in this work, and if we could better address these issues on a larger scale. So, we set up meetings with several state agency representatives.
- Many of the people we have been serving through the coalition are also served by the Division of Rehabilitation Services, which is overseen by the Department of Human Services.
- Several the coalition members also either work for or have a close relationship with the Centers for Independent Living, which are an effective way to provide emergency management services.
- The importance of effective communication, particularly for folks that have barriers accessing or using technology, is one of the many things we brought up in our conversations with state agencies.
- We recognized, through our conversations with state agencies, that there was a larger issue. We wanted to know, what is the larger issue? What is the root cause?
- We began engaging in legislative advocacy, and we reached out to several senators, one being Senator Julie Morrison, and we got a great response. But we had to determine what our legislative “ask” was.



IEMA

- We began looking at Emergency Management plans, specifically how they referred to people with disabilities, and what strategies they employed or didn't employ. We concluded that these plans needed to be reviewed and revised with disability-specific language and inclusive strategies so that disability concerns are not only considered but prioritized.
- With the help of Senator Morrison, our coalition drafted a bill alongside several other organizations, including Equip for Equality Inc., The Arc of Illinois, Access Living, and the statewide Independent Living Council, as well as several individual stakeholders.
- The bill was passed with bipartisan support on August 13th, 2021. It called for creating an access and functional needs advisory committee, which is why we are here today. The bill requires us to meet 3 times a year.
- What we are tasked with doing is reviewing and revising the Illinois Emergency Operations Plan (IEOP), as well as providing revision recommendations for the local emergency management plans.
- We plan to develop some sub-committees that both voting and non-voting members can be involved in.
- IEMA will be the agency leading these meetings.
- IEMA has gone above and beyond the direct interpretation of our bill and has included 4 representatives from first responder organizations.
- We will also have our required state agencies represented, and 9 people who identify as belonging to certain communities or as a person with a disability. These 9 people will hopefully be appointed soon and will be the voting members.
- Ideally, we are asking for the involvement of people that have different experiences and perspectives of disability, as well as various age, gender, race, and ethnic backgrounds, so that have diverse representation.
- It is also important to us that we have people who are located throughout the state.
- Two (2) of the seats will be occupied by either municipal or county emergency management agencies because they are on the ground doing this work.

Jennifer March (IEMA)

- We want to make sure that there is an overlap of people on the coalition, so there is never again a time where everyone is new, and nobody knows what is going on.
- Once we have a whole team of 9 people, we will elect a chairperson among the members, and hold a new election every year thereafter.
- The Governor's Office wants this committee to be the most diverse group it can be, so they keep challenging us to find more diverse applicants.
- If you know of any potential applicants, please send them our way.
- Advisory Committee members will serve without compensation.



IEMA

- We may end up meeting more often than the three (3) required times, since we don't have all nine (9) members appointed yet.
- This committee is tasked with delivering a report to the Governor's Office and the General Assembly by **July 1st, 2022**, and annually thereafter on the same date.
- The committee chairperson *may* be asked to lead the effort and make sure the report is compiled.
- A draft of the report will be sent out for non-voting members to make comments, and for voting members to suggest edits. If you have questions about the process, please feel free to ask.

Emergency Management 101

Scott Gauvin (IEMA)

- I wanted to provide a little background on how emergency management works at the state and local levels. I think this knowledge will become extremely beneficial to everyone as the committee begins to make recommendations and Director Tate-Nadeau works to execute those recommendations at IEMA.
- We deal with 25 different hazards in Illinois. We want to make sure that we have the resources, capabilities, understanding, and personnel to address each hazard. We have a document that identifies what these hazards are and what the consequences of each one might be, which we review regularly. These hazards have become more complex over time.

Tom Wilson

- Scott, I have a question. Under technological hazards, could something like electrical grid failure be included? There could be many different causes of that, but many people with disabilities are dependent on their devices that are usually plugged in.

Scott Gauvin (IEMA)

- Agreed; we do a consequence analysis as part of the hazard document I mentioned before, and electrical outages are listed because of winter storms, extreme heat, earthquakes, severe weather, and other hazards
- The new thing everyone is talking about is cyber incidents that affect the electrical grid, and we have had four (4) exercises about that in the past couple of months.
- Electrical grid failure is not a hazard, but a consequence of other hazards.
- CBRNE is an acronym that stands for **C**hemical, **B**iological, **R**adiological, **N**uclear, and **E**xplosive. Almost everything you can imagine that a terrorist would want to do could fall under CBRNE; 9/11 and the anthrax attacks afterward were both CBRNE events.
- These are the hazards that occupy our minds at IEMA, and I hope that it helps you think through what the consequences of these things might be for your community.



IEMA

- The Illinois Emergency Operations Plan (IEOP) is required by state statute under the IEMA Act, which provides all the resources, all the authority, all the responsibility to IEMA and our Director to be an advisor to the Governor and to prepare the state for all the hazards we talked about.
- The IEOP is available for anyone to view online. (It can be found at <https://www2.illinois.gov/iema/Preparedness/Pages/IEOP.aspx>)
- What the IEOP does is identify *what* each state agency does; we call this a "strategic plan," because it doesn't go into detail about *how* they do it.
- Each agency has internal plans to execute the roles that the IEOP says they will perform.
- In the future, we will develop operational plans with these agencies that will be hazard-specific and will go into detail on *how* we will respond. We will have a tornado plan, flooding plan, earthquake plan, etc.
- Where we will rely on the AFN committee the most is in the development of these operational plans; helping us figure out *how* we do things to be most inclusive of people with access and functional needs.
- Local emergency management offices have similar plans that identify which local agencies will be responsible for which tasks. The local agencies they work with also have internal plans describing *how* they will meet their responsibilities.
- We want to make sure we are absorbing best practices from other states that are a little bit ahead of us on this issue, as well as best practices from the field of emergency management and best practices identified by this committee.
- Since we have representatives from several different agencies in the Inter-Agency Strategic Planning Cell at IEMA, we can absorb these recommendations and don't have to spend much unnecessary time and effort to bring these agencies to the table.
- Once planning templates are developed for local agencies, we will be able to push those out through our eight (8) regions.
- If you live in a large city, like Chicago, you may have a city emergency management office in addition to a county office. Some counties in rural areas of the state are grouped and covered by a regional office, like the Montgomery & Christian County Emergency Management Office.
- There are five elements of emergency management: Prevention, Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery.
- Mitigation involves lessening the impacts of disasters; for example, building embankments around rivers so that flooding doesn't reach communities.
- The State of Illinois has been involved in some type of emergency response thirty-three (33) of the last thirty-six (36) months.



IEMA

- The Emergency Management community is trying to get better at starting recovery sooner after a disaster. The sooner we can do that, the easier and quicker we can get back to normal.
- An emergency response always starts at the local level. Once they are overwhelmed, the state gets involved, and if the state gets overwhelmed, we reach out to the federal government.

Kira Meskin

- Thank you. I wanted to remind everyone that when we are providing accessible meetings, it is helpful to identify yourself by name, list what your pronouns are, and give a visual description of yourself.
- I am a white woman wearing burgundy glasses. I have brown, long straight hair. I am wearing a green shirt with a necklace, and I'm sitting in my bedroom with a picture of plants behind me.
- Tyler (IDPH) pointed out that there is a question in the chat.
 - Randy Colon asked, "will the slides be available online or via email?"

Scott Gauvin (IEMA)

- Yes, we will email out the slides.

Jennifer March (IEMA)

- I'll make sure that the notes and the slides go out to everyone. I have had some folks reach out to me saying they couldn't join, but they wanted the notes.

Review of Issues and Recommendations

Kira Meskin

- First and foremost, what we are pushing here with this bill, and what we need to stay focused on, is reviewing and revising the current state emergency operations plan, and providing revision recommendations to local and county emergency management plans.
- One of our suggestions was to create accessible versions of emergency operations plans for the public, whether that is through revision or creating supplemental materials.
- Another important topic is inaccessible or ineffective emergency communications. We want to create a more systematic and efficient communication plan that relates well to the Americans with Disabilities Act and provides access to resources for our folk with disabilities that are utilizing home- and community-based services.
- We want to work on providing multiple methods of communication during emergency preparedness, response, and recovery. For our folks who are facing barriers to accessing technology, we want to make sure we provide physical mail, text messages, emails, phone calls, etc.



- Another suggestion is to create a voluntary emergency registry and ensure accessible emergency alert systems and communications.
- Another issue that we highlighted is the lack of integrated emergency management across state agencies and other states. We recommend ensuring effective efficient mechanisms for distributing equipment if it needs to be used again.
- We have found in the past that there has been a lack of utilization of our training for Centers for Independent Living when it comes to providing emergency management services. It's very exciting that we have a couple of folks like Jae Jin Pak and Shelly Richardson, who are connected with our statewide independent living council.
- We want to create an effective and systematic plan to relocate people living in congregate care settings, which impacts the services of a couple of state agencies that are present here today.
- We believe that there is a need for additional disability-related education and barrier awareness training, as well as certification programs. We'd love to assist in developing these training and certification programs for all professionals involved in emergency management.
- We need to ensure continuous improvement oversight of physical accessibility and compliance, so it's great to have someone from the Office of the Attorney General who is an expert on that.
- We wanted to highlight the importance of accessible, urgent transportation and evacuation routes and ensuring the emergency equipment we are using is accessible.
- Local regulatory codes need to truly address the issue that our folks with disabilities face.
- We want to take examples from other states, such as creating a functional assessment service team program and GIS web maps.
- Our long-term goal is to establish an Office of Access and Functional Needs within IEMA. While we are providing recommendations as an advisory committee, it would be excellent to hire people with disabilities who are paid for their time to ensure accountability.

Open Discussion

Scott Gauvin (IEMA)

- With the July 1st report deadline approaching, we must start thinking about a subcommittee structure. Do we organize it based on topic, or do we organize it based on common but separate needs?

Kira Meskin

- I'm looking in the chat right now to answer some questions.
- Anu asked, "How often do we meet?"



- According to the Senate Bill, we must meet at least three (3) times a year. Outside of those meetings, we'll also be working collaboratively, likely through a sub-committee format.

- John made a great comment that we also need to consider working with folks that have Alzheimer's or Dementia.

Scott Gauvin (IEMA)

- Another meeting could happen soon; it sounds like the Governor's Office is nearing the end of their appointment process.

Jennifer March (IEMA)

- Please keep sending applicants; we need a diverse applicant pool. The sooner we get more applicants into their hands, the sooner we can get all these positions filled and move on to committee business.
- I think the Governor's Office will approve a large group.
- We can get another meeting on the calendar after new people get caught up with meeting notes and slides.
- We will have to figure out what voting looks like if all the seats are not filled.
- Please feel free to reach out when you have questions, comments, or concerns, and we will make sure we route them and add them into the virtual conversation.

Scott Gauvin (IEMA)

- I think we are going to do more than what the legislation calls for from a meeting perspective, and hopefully from an output perspective also.
- We will open the floor for comments.

Kira Meskin

- I want to assure everyone that regardless of whether you are a voting member or not, your voice will still be heard, and you can serve on a sub-committee. Your involvement is still very much needed, so please feel empowered to continue to be an active part of these advisory committee meetings.

Tom Wilson

- My name is Tom, I use (he/him) pronouns. As this group moves forward and makes policy recommendations, what would the next steps be?

Scott Gauvin (IEMA)

- One of the elements of this legislation is the report, which is the vehicle to provide policy recommendations and goes to three (3) places: The Governor's Office, the Legislature, and the IEMA Director.
- Depending on what the recommendation is, it could be taken up and enacted by any one of those three groups.



Jae Jin Pak

- This is Jae Jin, I use (he/him) pronouns. I sit on the state independent living council.
- Those of you that apply and don't get appointed this round could be appointed next year or in future years.
- I like the idea of having a list of people who are interested in serving on the committee so that as people transition off, we have a pool to reach out to.
- One question I have is, who writes the report for July, is it coming from us?

Scott Gauvin (IEMA)

- Based on the legislation, the report is a product of this committee, detailing the recommendations that are discussed.
- I think it will be a group effort that we will all have a part in, whether you are a voting member or a non-voting member.

Ashley Murphy

- This is Ashley, I use she/her pronouns.
- When we finish the report, will there be a period getting feedback from the larger community or a period of public comment?

Scott Gauvin (IEMA)

- My staff hear me say all the time that you must develop the planning process before you develop the plan. What I would say is that we may want to think about developing that planning process.
- This year it will be a shortened version, but after July we can get into a rhythm. It may be that we don't have an open comment period this year, but in future years we will.
- In my mind, once that report is finished July 1st, we start the process immediately of writing the next report.

Laura VanPuymbrouck

- This is Laura, I am from Rush University and am part of the PPE coalition. I use (she/her) pronouns, I have dark blonde hair, I am a woman and I've got a black top on. I'm sitting in front of my bedroom wall.
- We might consider when we are creating the subcommittees, to charge the individuals heading up each subcommittee to make some form of public comment accessible.

Randy Colon

- This is Randy, I use (he/him) pronouns.
- I was hoping we could include some sort of discussion over accessibility in general in the planning process.



- I don't know how technologically savvy everyone will be, so we may need some sort of guidance on how to use the platform.
- Accessible meeting guidelines would be helpful.

Scott Gauvin (IEMA)

- IEMA is going to strive to provide every ounce of accessible support that we can.
- I am open to all feedback, and the agency is as well. We want to put on a very accessible, functional, and worthwhile meeting for everybody.

Kira Meskin

- This question is for the state agencies. I am wondering, what is your plan to relay the information that we're discussing during our advisory committee meetings and sub-committee meetings to the rest of your agency?
- I suppose I will call on folks, so the person serving for the Department of Public Health, do you mind answering that question?

Anu Meka (IDPH)

- So, you want to know how our agency is a part of this, how we provide for social access needs?

Kira Meskin

- I'm just curious how you are going to be serving as a liaison in reporting information back to your agency.

Anu Meka (IDPH)

- IDPH is the lead agency for health-related risks in general populations. We have a special populations annex (to our plan) that gives a brief overview of how our response works.
- Local Health Departments have their own plans, and their plans are required to have an access and functional needs component also.
- These plans are written up and revised often, usually whenever anything changes or at least once every five (5) years.

John Eckert

- We have several advisory councils, and we have regular meetings with our care coordination units and our Agencies on Aging. We will be sharing information with them and getting some feedback too.

David Kuriniec

- I will share the information we gather here with the secretary's office. It may either be directly or through my director. I don't know, but we will get it to the secretary.



- We have regular meetings between divisions, and the information will be shared with all the divisions at that time.

Judith Levitan

- The Attorney General's Office is not an agency, we are a separate elected office like the Governor's Office.
- I think that our role on this committee is to provide support in terms of reviewing and helping to create policies, while ensuring they are compliant with various laws, like the Environmental Barriers Act.

Barbara Pritchard

- I wanted to comment and say that I am unable to read the chat, so when people say anything in the chat, it becomes inaccessible to me.
- I am not a good typist to type in the chat as well.
- If there are important things in the chat, please put them in the notes, and if they are important for the rest of the meeting, please verbalize them. That would be helpful to me.

Kira Meskin

- Excellent feedback Barbara. I hope that for our next meeting, we can reach out to everyone and ask further what everyone's accommodation needs are when using WebEx.

Tyler Woodard (IDPH)

- I can copy the chat for today and provide it alongside the notes.

Randy Colon

- I think it might be helpful to discuss one of the next few meetings about how to make the meetings more accessible for people overall.

Scott Gauvin (IEMA)

- It is now 3 o'clock. I think we had an excellent discussion.
- We intend to make this meeting extremely accessible so that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate.