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# Planning Considerations: Putting People First

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FEMA

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DRAFT

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# 1. Introduction

Emergency managers share the goal of saving lives and protecting property by mitigating, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters. This goal applies to everyone within a community. Meeting the needs of these populations requires emergency managers to embrace and consider people first in the planning process by incorporating equity, inclusion, and accessibility in each step of the planning process.

## 1.1. Purpose

This document is intended to support state, local, tribal, and territorial emergency managers, and participants in their efforts to respond to the needs of their whole community including underserved populations throughout the planning process.

## 1.2. What Does Putting People First Mean?

Putting people first means taking a whole community approach to emergency management planning and using the lenses of equity, accessibility, and inclusion to identify the needs of populations who previously may have not had their needs met due to past policy decisions or other gaps in planning assumptions and considerations. People first also means including these populations in the planning process as the experts on their needs and potential unique risks and vulnerabilities. Emergency managers can learn about their community through research; or, ideally talking directly to underserved populations to hear their insights and perspectives and build relationships and trust with those populations. Accessibility means not only finding ways to enable people to be part of the process but also considering how to make information accessible to everyone including people with disabilities and other access and functional needs.

The process of weaving equity, inclusion and accessibility throughout plans, policy, and guidance is not a single effort or action. Truly being inclusive is an ongoing process involving the following:

- Listening to and empowering people from all parts of the community, particularly those from underserved communities, to participate in the planning process;
- Revising plans, policies, and other guidance to reflect the priorities and needs of the whole community; and
- Ongoing awareness and evaluation as communities' characteristics and needs change over time.

People are complex and cannot be described by a single characteristic; therefore, emergency managers can consider how identities may combine or overlap in the lived experiences of individuals and communities (often referred to as "intersectionality"). Understanding how the concept of intersectionality can help emergency managers identify multi-layered challenges will result in plans and programs that allow flexibility in providing services that will be the best for each impacted individual.

35 Emergency managers should also be mindful of federal laws that may be applicable, such as [Title VI](#)  
36 [of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), [Section 308 of the Robert T. Stafford Act](#), [Section 504 of the](#)  
37 [Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), [Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#), [the Fair Housing Act](#)  
38 [of 1968](#), [the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968](#), [the Communications Act of 1934](#), [the Individuals](#)  
39 [with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\) of 1975](#), [Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972](#) and  
40 [the Age Discrimination Act of 1975](#), all as amended as well as applicable state and local laws.



### 41 Guidance for Emergency Managers on Complying with Federal Laws

42 *Guidance to State and Local Governments and Other Federally Assisted Recipients Engaged in*  
43 *Emergency Preparedness, Response, Mitigation, and Recovery Activities on Compliance with*  
44 *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*<sup>1</sup>, provides guidance to recipients of federal financial  
45 assistance engaged in emergency management activities on compliance with the Civil Rights  
46 Act of 1964. Additionally, the [Department of Homeland Security's website](#) also has reference  
47 materials on disability access and emergency management.

## 48 1.3. Guide Structure

49 This guide has five major sections:

- 50 1. [Introduction](#) describes the purpose of the guide.
- 51 2. [Putting People First in Planning](#) is the heart of the guide presenting a set of principles for  
52 planning to meet the needs of a community, followed by an explanation of how to incorporate the  
53 needs of underserved populations during the planning process, as described in the  
54 [Comprehensive Preparedness Guide \(CPG\) 101: Developing and Maintaining Emergency](#)  
55 [Operations Plans](#).
- 56 3. [Community Engagement](#) covers how emergency managers can improve stakeholder engagement  
57 to encourage broader participation from the community.
- 58 4. [Conclusion](#) ends the guide with a short list of important concepts for emergency managers to  
59 keep in mind.

60 The guide also contains appendices that include more detailed information.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information visit: [Civil Rights Division | 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 \(justice.gov\)](#)

- 61   ▪ [Appendix A](#) provides a series of community snapshots that will give emergency managers ideas  
62    on how to learn more about specific community segments.
  - 63   ▪ [Appendix B](#) describes considerations for incorporating diverse and varied needs of the  
64    community into specific plan types including evacuation, continuity, and mitigation.
  - 65   ▪ [Appendix C](#) gives a list of possible vulnerabilities and/or assets that emergency managers could  
66    consider.
  - 67   ▪ [Appendix D](#) describes how emergency managers can use qualitative and quantitative  
68    approaches, geospatial analysis, and data visualization to inform and support inclusive planning.
  - 69   ▪ [Appendix E](#) includes definitions of terms and acronyms used throughout the guide.
- 70   Anyone engaged in an emergency management planning process can use the information in this  
71    guide, not just those with the official title 'planner'. This guide offers practical information on how to  
72    prioritize the needs of all populations in the community throughout the planning process and  
73    address the disproportionate impact of disasters on underserved communities.

## 74 2. Putting People First in Planning

75 Emergency managers should understand the composition, capabilities, priorities, and needs of the  
76 people they serve. Understanding a community's demographics, geography, history, and resources  
77 can help identify unique needs and inform engagements. Additionally, understanding the potential  
78 barriers that may limit or eliminate an individual's access to necessary resources, services, or  
79 successful outcomes in the wake of a disaster is key. Planning for, and the inclusive participation of,  
80 the broader community is essential to ensure an effective planning process and resulting plans.

81 This section introduces cross-cutting planning principles and considerations to support equitable and  
82 inclusive emergency management planning. [Appendix B](#) provides a series of self-assessment  
83 questions emergency managers can use to develop or review various types of emergency  
84 management plans and ensure they account for, and meet the needs of, the entire community.

### 85 2.1. Conceptual Framework

86 The concepts of accessibility, equity, and inclusion are particularly important in emergency  
87 management because the firsthand experience of underserved communities and research about the  
88 distribution of disaster impacts have consistently shown that disasters affect those communities  
89 disproportionately.<sup>2</sup> Disaster literature provides many examples of how factors such as race, income,  
90 age, disability, and gender run in parallel to outcomes in disaster preparedness, mitigation,  
91 response, and recovery. Examples include the following:

- 92 ▪ Older adults are often at higher risk of death or injury during disasters because of a higher risk of  
93 health problems, reduced mobility, and fixed incomes.
- 94 ▪ People living in rural areas, due to lack of access to local doctors and healthcare facilities among  
95 other factors, can be at greater risk for poor health outcomes that place them at greater risk in  
96 disaster situations.
- 97 ▪ Low-income populations and communities of color are more likely to suffer property damage,  
98 injury, and death, in part because there is a higher likelihood of living in older, denser, disaster-  
99 prone neighborhoods with lower-quality housing and inadequate services.
- 100 ▪ Government assistance programs are often based on pre-event home values. Due to redlining  
101 and other historical housing policies, people of color often live in housing markets with  
102 depressed values and, consequently, receive less post-disaster assistance.
- 103 ▪ Underserved communities are less likely to be able to respond to disaster-related warnings,  
104 including evacuation orders, due to a lack of resources needed to act (e.g., access to

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<sup>2</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Disaster Technical Assistance Center Supplemental Research Bulletin Greater Impact: How Disasters Affect People of Low Socioeconomic Status. July 2017. Accessed June 21, 2023. [https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/dtac/srb-low-ses\\_2.pdf](https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/dtac/srb-low-ses_2.pdf).



105 transportation, funds to pay for emergency housing, use of smartphones). Alert and warnings  
106 also may not reach underserved communities because these communications are not provided  
107 through trusted channels or in a language that they understand.

108 Other potentially underserved groups include individuals with disabilities, and people with access  
109 and functional needs such as literacy challenges and English comprehension. Access and functional  
110 needs can make adapting to extreme circumstances particularly challenging and stressful, especially  
111 when preparedness efforts have not accounted for these needs. If information is presented only in  
112 English, those with limited English proficiency will be at a disadvantage.

113 FEMA has developed a series of community snapshots, provided in [Appendix A](#), that outline planning  
114 considerations, strategic questions, and resources to help learn more about specific segments of the  
115 population. These snapshots are based on experience, insights, and lessons learned from, and by,  
116 practitioners across FEMA and its partners.

117 Ensuring the needs of all populations in a community are met is multidimensional, however, it can be  
118 described and measured as having three key interconnected elements: access, process, and  
119 outcome.

120 ▪ **Access** is the extent to which resources and services are distributed in the same or similar way  
121 across people or groups, and it encompasses the equitable distribution of costs, benefits, rights,  
122 responsibilities, and risk within and among groups from present and future generations.  
123 Improved access is the reduction of barriers to resources, services, and opportunities. Improved  
124 access can help in building community resilience and ensuring a stronger recovery across the  
125 community.

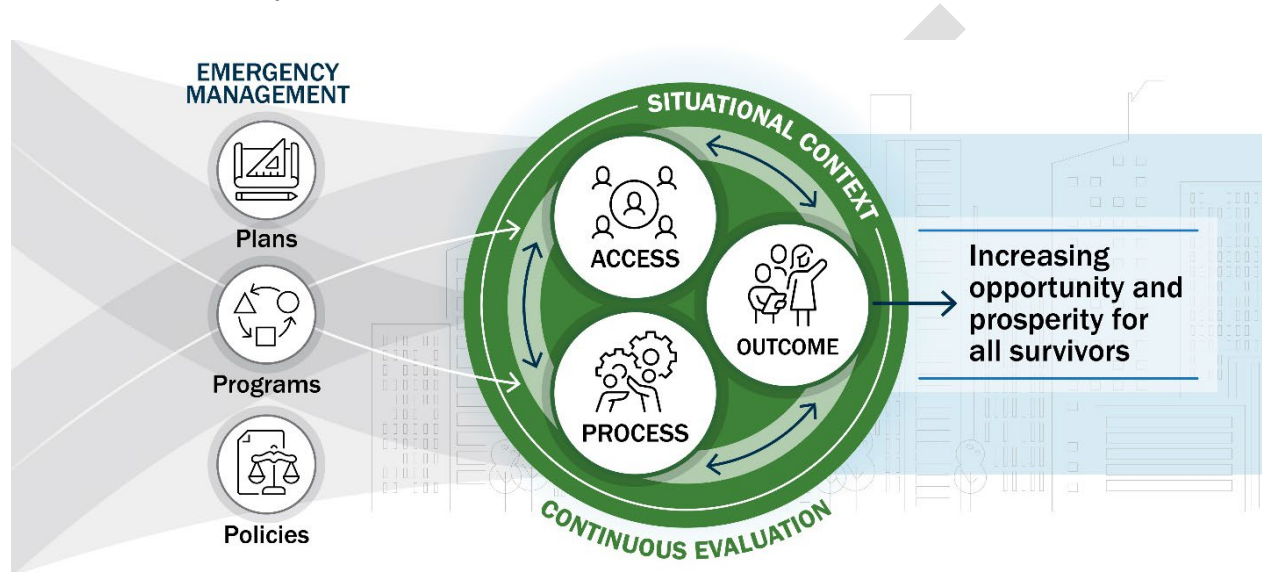
126 ▪ **Processes** are characterized by the fair and intentional involvement and inclusion of all groups in  
127 rulemaking and decisions, including planning processes or the development of policy and  
128 regulation.

129 ▪ **Outcomes** are characterized by increasing agency and opportunities for people to achieve their  
130 goals or meet their needs through appropriate access and inclusionary processes. It also refers  
131 to both consideration of the broad social, governance, economic, and cultural contexts, past and  
132 present (e.g., power dynamics, gender, education, ethnicity, age) that define underlying  
133 community conditions and dynamics, and the future result of equitable access and process  
134 participation.

135 In the emergency management context, the three elements of access, processes, and outcomes  
136 (Figure 1) can be seen as the following:

137 ▪ **Access to Services and Benefits**—the distribution of costs and benefits is uneven, with  
138 underserved communities often bearing the burden or cost of policy decisions while also not  
139 receiving the benefits of projects and investments.

- 140 ▪ **Participation in Community Decision-Making Process**—emergency management planning efforts,  
141 programs or policies often do not give enough opportunity for the voices and interests of  
142 underserved communities to be heard or included.
- 143 ▪ **Risk and Vulnerability as Outcomes**—the impacts of disaster have a disproportionate impact on  
144 underserved communities, including disaster survivors, because of patterns of discriminatory  
145 political, economic, and social conditions. This dimension of equity is often thought of in terms of  
146 social vulnerability.



147

148 **Figure 1: Access, Process, and Outcome Framework<sup>3</sup>**

149 The following sections explore these dimensions more fully. Understanding these dimensions will  
150 help emergency managers better address the needs of all populations within a community  
151 throughout the planning process.

152 **2.1.1. ACCESS TO SERVICES AND BENEFITS**

153 Underserved populations may have fewer resources and protections in general and even less access  
154 to services and benefits. Different population groups may face greater challenges in accessing public  
155 and private sector resources for a variety of reasons. Examples include the following:

- 156 ▪ **Access to Government Services and Benefits.** The benefits from public programs and services  
157 are not always evenly communicated or distributed within or across different communities,  
158 sometimes intentionally and sometimes unintentionally. For example, the complexity of disaster  
159 assistance programs has been a barrier for some attempting to access disaster assistance. In

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<sup>3</sup> Argonne National Laboratory. *Introduction to the Access, Process, and Outcome Framework for Equity in Economic Development*. 2023. Retrieved from: [https://www.eda.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/NERRC\\_Quarterly\\_Equity\\_Research\\_Brief\\_Final.pdf](https://www.eda.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/NERRC_Quarterly_Equity_Research_Brief_Final.pdf)

160 addition, research indicates that income inequality has increased at greater rates in jurisdictions  
161 that experience more frequent and severe disaster losses than those that experience fewer  
162 disaster losses.<sup>4</sup> Governments at all levels may use decision criteria that inadvertently direct  
163 resources away from those who need them the most. For example, benefit-cost analysis may be  
164 structured in a way that causes benefits for higher-value assets to outweigh potential benefits to  
165 lower-value assets, potentially giving preference to projects that protect higher-value assets.

166 ■ **Access to High-Speed Internet.** Communities need high-speed internet to learn about and  
167 access many public and private sector resources. However, significant differences exist in  
168 broadband access (or usage) based on race, ethnicity, income, and educational attainment.<sup>5</sup>  
169 Similarly, broadband access is lower in rural areas than it is in suburban and urban areas. This  
170 disparity may impact awareness of and access to recovery programs. It may also impact  
171 emergency managers' and government partners' efforts to efficiently distribute public alerts and  
172 warnings with the most up-to-date information.

173 ■ **Access to Transportation.** Programs requiring in-person consultation or registration make it  
174 difficult for populations without access to reliable transportation to use them, especially when  
175 those locations are not located near underserved communities. Likewise, if a disaster disrupts  
176 transportation services, some populations may have difficulty accessing places of employment,  
177 or they may not be able to evacuate when necessary.

### 178 **Strategic Questions to Help Understand Needs of Different Communities - Access**

179 [Appendix A](#) provides community snapshots. Each snapshot provides an overview of the  
180 community, strategic questions, and resources to learn more. Questions to help understand  
181 potential barriers impacting access to services and benefits include:

- 182 ■ What resources are available in your community to communicate with people with limited  
183 English proficiency? How will you scale up or leverage resources to meet language access  
184 needs in an emergency or evacuation? Are there local interpretation and translation  
185 companies that you can leverage?
- 186 ■ What are the disability community's current barriers to accessing routine and emergency  
187 critical resources?
- 188 ■ Are there any features or challenges unique to your area that may have a significant impact  
189 on people with disabilities, or those with access and functional needs (e.g., structural

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<sup>4</sup> Howell, J., and J. Elliot, "Damages Done: The Longitudinal Impacts of Natural Hazards on Wealth Inequality in the United States." *Social Problems* 66(3): 448-467. August 14, 2018. Accessed June 21, 2023. <https://disasterphilanthropy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Damages-Done.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Pew Research Center, *Broadband/Internet Fact Sheet*. 2021. Accessed June 21, 2023. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/internet-broadband/?menuitem=89fe9877-d6d0-42c5-bca0-8e6034e300aa>

190 community inaccessibility, lack of accessible housing, few to no accessible public  
191 transportation options, shortage of personal care attendants, sign language interpreters)?

## 192 **2.1.2. PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES**

193 Whole community participation is essential to ensuring that populations have their needs met during  
194 an emergency. Emergency managers should encourage active participation so those most impacted  
195 by disasters, particularly those in underserved populations, can begin to inform long-term decision-  
196 making and access critical resources. Without meaningful participation, officials and organizations  
197 responsible for distributing resources such as recovery support and mitigation funding may not be  
198 aware of areas or populations with disproportionate needs. Emergency managers should be aware of  
199 personal or social barriers to participation. These barriers are obstacles caused or increased by  
200 harmful stereotypes, stigma, socioeconomic status, religion, race, ethnicity, gender, or others.  
201 Vulnerable people may not readily participate because of eroded trust in programs and public service  
202 structures. Other potential barriers to participation include government inaction to establishing  
203 meaningful connection with communities; a lack of time due to working multiple jobs; a lack of  
204 broadband; a lack of access to transportation; language challenges; and other access and functional  
205 needs.

206 Ensuring meaningful participation from members of the community during the planning process not  
207 only improves plan quality, but also leads to more effective implementation and builds trust. Broad  
208 and meaningful participation can also improve awareness for underserved communities about  
209 potential assistance, which in turn can enhance delivery of resources in an efficient and  
210 appropriately targeted way. Emergency managers should implement active engagement techniques,  
211 including working one-on-one and in small groups, as well as leveraging partnerships with  
212 businesses, non-profits, and faith-based organizations, which can improve participation both with the  
213 community-at-large and underserved communities. The ability to develop these trusted relationships  
214 and integrate the involvement of underserved communities will take time and resources, which is an  
215 essential part of inclusive planning.

216 When gathering information on communities, it is beneficial for emergency managers to have open  
217 discussions with community members to verify accuracy of the data gathered and analyzed, which  
218 will help build trust between emergency managers and the community. Members. It shows respect  
219 for the lived experience of the local community.<sup>6</sup> It also enables emergency managers better  
220 understand local challenges and strengths, which is key for identifying community champions and  
221 action planning. It encourages open communication between community members.

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<sup>6</sup> Giuptill, M., "Engaging Communities as Experts throughout the Assessment Process." Health Resources in Action. November 1, 2021. Accessed June 21, 2023. <https://hria.org/2021/11/01/communityassessment/>.

222 **Strategic Questions to Help Understand Needs of Different Communities - Process**

223 [Appendix A](#) provides community snapshots. Each snapshot provides an overview of the  
224 community, strategic questions, and resources to learn more. Questions to help increase  
225 participation in community decision-making processes include:

- 226 ▪ Have you previously provided the disability community the opportunity to meaningfully  
227 contribute to disaster planning efforts?
- 228 ▪ How can you effectively communicate risks to children and youth and involve them in  
229 planning and recovery processes?
- 230 ▪ What organizations, nonprofits, and agencies do older adults currently have strong  
231 relationships with?

232 **2.1.3. RISK AND VULNERABILITY AS OUTCOMES**

233 Pre-existing risk and hazard vulnerability directly influence disaster needs and outcomes. For the  
234 purposes of this guide, risk is defined as “the potential for an unwanted outcome as determined by  
235 its likelihood and the consequence.”<sup>7</sup> Vulnerability is defined as “a physical feature or operational  
236 attribute that renders an entity...susceptible to a given hazard.”<sup>8</sup>

237 Certain populations (e.g., people of color, indigenous people, people who are incarcerated, infants,  
238 children, disabilities, older adults), households with low incomes, and individuals with access or  
239 functional needs are more vulnerable to the effects of hazards. Examples include the following:

- 240 ▪ **Homeownership.** As of the third quarter of 2021, 74% of White non-Hispanic households owned  
241 their home, whereas only 44% of Black and 48% of Hispanic households owned their homes.<sup>9</sup>  
242 From an income perspective, 79% of households with income at or above median family income  
243 own a home, whereas 51.7% of households below median family income own a home.  
244 Individuals who rent are at greater risk of housing disruption (i.e., eviction, trouble finding new  
245 housing) than homeowners. Reasons for this include delays in rebuilding rental property and  
246 decreases in affordable housing supply post-disaster, due to both loss of building stock and  
247 increases in rent due to limited supply.<sup>10</sup> According to a poll in 2020, 57% of renters had renters

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<sup>7</sup> FEMA, *Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning Guide for Local Governments*. February 2017. Accessed February 18, 2022. <https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/pre-disaster-recovery-planning-guide-local-governments.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> United States Census Bureau, *Housing Vacancies and Homeownership (Current Population Survey/Housing Vacancy Survey)*. 2021. Accessed June 21, 2023. <https://www.census.gov/housing/hvs/data/histtabs.html>.

<sup>10</sup> General Accounting Office, *Disaster Assistance: Federal Assistance for Permanent Housing Primarily Benefited Homeowners; Opportunities Exist to Better Target Rental Housing Needs*. January 2010. Accessed June 21, 2023. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-10-17.pdf>.

248 insurance; 93% of homeowners had homeowners insurance in a 2016 poll.<sup>11,12</sup> Separately, in  
249 2021, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) updated its [policy](#) to address  
250 situations where individuals do not hold titles for the properties they have inherited, which had  
251 previously been a cause of some families being unable to obtain FEMA assistance for damages  
252 to their homes.

- 253
- 254 ■ **Income and Wealth.** Nationally, median income for all households is \$74,755, according to the  
255 2022 American Community Survey 1-year estimates. When examining income data by race and  
256 ethnicity, disparities are clear. Median income for White non-Hispanic households is \$79,933,  
257 compared to \$51,374 for Black households and \$65,882 for Hispanic households.<sup>13</sup> The  
258 average Black and Hispanic or Latino households own only about 15% to 20% as much net  
259 wealth as White non-Hispanic households.<sup>14</sup> Experience and research indicate that, on average,  
260 lower-income populations are at higher risk from natural hazards than higher-income  
261 populations. For example, counties with higher percentages of impoverished populations have  
262 higher hazard losses. This trend is most pronounced in locations with impoverished non-White  
263 populations.<sup>15</sup>
  - 264 ■ **Health.** Communities of color are disproportionately located near toxic chemical plants, breathe  
265 the worst air, and drink contaminated water.<sup>16</sup> This leads to worsening health, which then makes  
266 these individuals more susceptible to disaster impacts. Beyond differences based on race or  
267 ethnicity, increased vulnerability can manifest in multiple ways for different populations.  
268 Individuals with chronic health conditions may be more vulnerable to disruptions in healthcare  
269 services or critical lifelines. In addition, they may be more vulnerable to changing conditions due  
270 to climate change, such as increased instances of extreme heat. For example, power outages will  
have an outsized impact on individuals who rely on power-dependent medical devices. Children

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<sup>11</sup> Insurance Information Institute, *Triple-I Consumer Poll*. September 2020. Accessed June 21, 2023.  
[https://www.iii.org/sites/default/files/docs/pdf/2020\\_triple-i\\_consumer\\_poll\\_091620.pdf](https://www.iii.org/sites/default/files/docs/pdf/2020_triple-i_consumer_poll_091620.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Insurance Information Institute, *2016 Consumer Insurance Survey Homeowners Insurance: Understanding, Attitudes and Shopping Practices*. February 2017. Accessed June 21, 2023. <https://www.iii.org/sites/default/files/docs/pdf/pulse-wp-020217-final.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> United States Census Bureau, *Table S1903 Median Income in the Past 12 Months 2022 ACS 1-year estimates*. Accessed November 15, 2023. <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2022.S1903?q=median+income&moe=false>.

<sup>14</sup> Federal Reserve, *Wealth Inequality, and the Racial Wealth Gap*. 2021. Accessed June 9, 2022.  
<https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/wealth-inequality-and-the-racial-wealth-gap-20211022.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> Tate, E., and C. Emrich, "Assessing Social Equity in Disasters." *Eos*. February 23, 2021. Accessed June 21, 2023.  
<https://eos.org/science-updates/assessing-social-equity-in-disasters>.

<sup>16</sup> Bullard, R.D., "Race and environmental justice in the United States." *Yale J. Int'l L.*, 18, 319. 1993. Accessed June 21, 2023.  
[https://openyls.law.yale.edu/bitstream/handle/20.500.13051/6282/16\\_18YaleJIntIL319\\_1993\\_.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y](https://openyls.law.yale.edu/bitstream/handle/20.500.13051/6282/16_18YaleJIntIL319_1993_.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y).

271 and minorities are more vulnerable to prolonged behavioral health impacts from both natural  
272 and human-caused disasters.<sup>17</sup>

273 **Strategic Questions to Help Understand Needs of Different Communities - Outcome**

274 [Appendix A](#) provides community snapshots. Each snapshot provides an overview of the  
275 community, strategic questions, and resources to learn more. Questions to help understand the  
276 needs of the various communities relative to achieving successful outcomes include:

- 277 ▪ Are there any features or challenges unique to your area that may have a significant impact  
278 on people with disabilities?
- 279 ▪ Has your community experienced a significant emergency or disaster that impacted child-  
280 serving organizations, including schools and childcare centers? If so, how were services  
281 quickly reestablished so that parents could return to work?
- 282 ▪ Has the LGBTQ+ community previously faced challenges in disaster preparedness and  
283 response? How was that experience?

284 **2.1.4. COMMON BARRIERS**

285 Due to the size and complexity of many programs, it is inevitable that some populations within a  
286 community may experience barriers to access programs and services, participation in processes, and  
287 successful outcomes. Historical policy decisions may have steered resources away from certain  
288 populations that led to inequities. However, barriers can take many forms, “barriers to access are  
289 conditions or obstacles that prevent someone from using or accessing knowledge or resources.”<sup>18</sup>  
290 Figure 2 outlines four common types of barriers – Administrative, Communication, Personal or  
291 Social, and Physical.

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<sup>17</sup> Norris, F.J., et al., “60,000 Disaster Victims Speak: Part I. An Empirical Review of the Empirical Literature, 1981–2001.” *Psychiatry* 65(3), 207-39. 2002. Accessed June 21, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1521/psyc.65.3.207.20173>.

<sup>18</sup> FEMA. *A Guide to Community Engagement*. 2023.

## COMMON BARRIERS



### Obstacles to accessing services and amenities

- Services, such as vaccination sites, that are only available during limited hours or days of the week.
- Lack of available childcare services or alternatives, which can limit program participation among those with children.
- Settings with limited accommodations for dietary preferences, religious requirements, or cultural preferences.



### Obstacles to finding, understanding, and using information

- Information that is inaccessible without a phone or computer.
- Information that is inaccessible to those with difficulties reading or speaking, or those who are hearing- or sight-impaired.
- Videos without closed captions.
- Information that is not available in multiple languages.



### Obstacles caused or increased by harmful stereotypes, stigma, socioeconomic status, religion, race, ethnicity, gender, or others

- Stereotypes and bias against marginalized communities, including assuming a poor quality of life or limited intellectual capacity, which may prevent meaningful connection between FEMA and a community or individual or which might prevent access to information or services.
- Financial strain that makes it challenging to participate in engagements or initiatives.



### Obstacles to physically navigating a space

- The inability to enter or use a site for people who use wheelchairs or individuals that need seating accommodation.
- Limited, inconvenient, or no access to public transportation.
- Services located in limited locations or far from major community hubs such as major employers, schools, or childcare facilities.

292

293

**Figure 2: Common Barriers and Example Obstacles**

294 **Administrative barriers** may include but are not limited to obstacles such as program sites being  
295 open only during specific hours on specific days, not providing adequate childcare services to allow  
296 for the application to programs, not providing for dietary or religious needs of the community through  
297 programs, and a complex and time-intensive application processes that create obstacles to  
298 accessing services. Governments at all levels also may use decision criteria that inadvertently direct  
299 resources away from those who need them the most. For example, benefit-cost analysis may be  
300 structured in a way that causes benefits for higher-value assets to outweigh potential benefits to  
301 lower-value assets, potentially giving preference to projects that protect higher-value assets. This  
302 approach emphasizes property, not people, as the most important thing to protect.



303 **Communication barriers** are obstacles to finding, understanding, and using information while  
304 administrative barriers are obstacles to accessing services and amenities. Communication barriers  
305 may include but are not limited to documents not compliant with accessibility standards, videos that  
306 do not have closed captioning, information that is inaccessible without a phone or computer, and  
307 information that does not have adequate accommodation for those who struggle to read, are hard of  
308 hearing, or have low vision.

309 **Personal or social barriers** are obstacles caused, or increased, by harmful stereotypes, stigma,  
310 socioeconomic status, religion, race, ethnicity, gender, or others. These types of barriers may include,  
311 fear rooted in lived or perceived danger that may prevent someone from accessing government  
312 services, or a perception of a poor quality of life or limited intellectual capacity that may prevent  
313 access to information or prevent a meaningful connection between individuals in a community and  
314 emergency response officials. Barriers of this type may also include lack of time, resources or  
315 financial strain that prevent community members from participating in the planning process or  
316 accessing services.

317 **Physical barriers** also can limit access by creating obstacles to physically navigating a space.  
318 Physical barriers include locating services in a limited number of locations, locations with limited or  
319 no access to public transportation, or in areas far away from major community hubs. Other types of  
320 physical barriers include sites that are poorly identified or marked, not accessible to people who use  
321 wheelchairs or do not provide seating accommodation.

## 322 2.2. Applying the Planning Process to Overcome Barriers

323 Effective planning can help overcome barriers to access, process, and outcomes. FEMA's [CPG 101](#)  
324 provides guidance on the fundamentals of planning and developing emergency operations plans and  
325 presents a flexible six-step planning process (Figure 3 ) that communities can use to adapt to varying  
326 characteristics and situations.



327

328

**Figure 3. CPG 101 Six-Step Planning Process**

329 This section provides an overview of people first considerations within each step in the planning  
330 process. The guidance builds on the whole community approach that the emergency management  
331 community has widely adopted, increasing the emphasis on whole community and equitable  
332 engagement, participation, and decision-making to effectively address the needs of underserved  
333 communities.



## 334 Planning Principles – People First

335 CPG 101 outlines several planning principles, including that “planning should be community-  
336 based, representing the whole population and its needs.” The following principles provide  
337 additional considerations on how to address the needs of people in all phases of the planning  
338 process:

- 339 ▪ Heed the adage “Nothing about us without us.” All populations that could be affected by  
340 the plan ought to have the opportunity to be engaged and represented in the planning  
341 process.
- 342 ▪ Center the planning process on people and communities, not the built environment or  
343 things.
- 344 ▪ Make a long-term commitment to partnering with underserved communities.
- 345 ▪ Ensure no population is disproportionately impacted by decisions.
- 346 ▪ Research your community and seek to understand how underserved communities were  
347 formed and how government policies, historical and current, impact these communities.
- 348 ▪ Develop relationships with local non-profits who already work with underserved  
349 populations to better understand specific needs and identify solutions.
- 350 ▪ Build trust through intentional, authentic engagement and a willingness to acknowledge  
351 past actions (or inaction) and the subsequent impacts.
- 352 ▪ Question assumptions. Just because something has always been done a particular way or  
353 is a standard assumption does not make it true.

### 354 2.2.1. FORM A COLLABORATIVE PLANNING TEAM

355 The planning process starts with building the planning team. A key benefit of planning is in the  
356 relationships that planning team members build through the process. Including voices from across  
357 the community in the planning process helps ensure the needs of underserved communities are  
358 understood, represented, and addressed. It is also an opportunity to build trust and long-term  
359 relationships that are critical before, during, and after disasters.

360 Emergency managers can use available demographic data to understand the socio-economic  
361 characteristics of their communities and identify potentially at-risk or impacted underserved  
362 populations whose interests can be represented on the planning team. Once those underserved

363 populations have been identified, emergency managers should engage with community leaders to  
364 select appropriate representatives to join the collaborative planning team and represent the  
365 interests of those populations. Inviting members of community groups, professional associations,  
366 and equity-focused task forces (e.g., health, transportation, water) to participate in the planning  
367 process can be an effective way to ensure the needs of the community are clearly identified,  
368 understood, and addressed. These representatives may also leverage knowledge of the populations  
369 they represent or be able to better identify knowledge gaps in the population.

370 The team should also ensure it has a strong understanding of the history and current concerns of  
371 underserved populations. In addition to accessing demographic data, members of the planning team  
372 can meet and talk with members of the community to understand their needs and priorities; the  
373 planning team may have to work through formal and informal networks, such as faith leaders and  
374 advocates that already support the community. The planning team may also need to change or  
375 expand over time as more voices are heard and more understanding of the situation is gained.  
376 Emergency managers should remain flexible and adapt the process to be inclusive. Ensuring that the  
377 planning team represents all members of the community requires that outreach efforts are tailored  
378 to be effective at reaching all potential stakeholders.

### 379 Social Vulnerability Index

380 The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published the [Social Vulnerability Index](#).  
381 Natural disasters and infectious disease outbreaks can pose a threat to a community's health.  
382 Socially vulnerable populations are especially at risk during public health emergencies  
383 because of factors like socioeconomic status, household composition, or housing type and  
384 transportation. To help public health officials and emergency management planners meet the  
385 needs of socially vulnerable populations in emergency response and recovery efforts, the  
386 Geospatial Research, Analysis, and Services Program created and maintains the CDC/Agency  
387 for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry Social Vulnerability Index, or SVI.

### 388 Questions to Consider When Forming the Collaborative Planning Team

- 389
- 390 ▪ Who will the plan impact most, and are they represented at the table?
  - 391 ▪ Does the planning team itself have diverse perspectives?
  - 392 ▪ How can the planning team be creatively structured to include all voices but also be manageable and practical? Are additional voices needed in this planning process?
  - 393 ▪ How will the jurisdiction use participatory methods, including accessible communications,  
394 to ensure decisions are informed by diverse perspectives and represent consensus views?

### 395 2.2.2. UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION

396 Identifying and understanding a community’s composition and the specific needs of different  
397 population segments, is a fundamental part of the “Understand the Situation” step in the planning  
398 process. Having a clear picture of the community’s composition can also reveal additional planning  
399 team members, as well as potential assets, capabilities, and resources for consideration later in the  
400 planning process. At this stage, the planning team can look at how risk and vulnerability vary across  
401 different socio-economic groups and incorporate considerations for meeting the needs of high-risk  
402 and high-vulnerability populations into the decision-making process. [Appendix A](#) provides more in-  
403 depth information on how to research specific segments of the community and a list of sample  
404 vulnerabilities and assets to consider is in [Appendix C](#).

405 Emergency managers can develop the information needed to clearly articulate the needs of  
406 underserved communities through input from the planning team and direct engagement with those  
407 populations, non-profits, and other community-based organizations. The planning team, at this stage,  
408 can also consider how exclusionary practices may have played a role in past policy decisions.  
409 Emergency managers can also use available data sources to improve understanding of their  
410 communities. [Appendix D](#) covers the methods of data analysis and potential sources for planning.



#### 411 Resources for Understanding Communities

412 [Appendix A](#) provides community snapshots. Each snapshot provides an overview of the  
413 community, strategies questions and resources to learn more. Resources include:

414 [Resilience Analysis and Planning Tool \(RAPT\)](#)

415 [IS-0366.a: Planning for the Needs of Children in Disasters - Course Overview](#)

416 [American Community Survey Data and Language Maps – LEP.gov](#)

417 [Queer and Present Danger: Understanding the Disparate Impacts of Disasters on LGBTQ+](#)  
418 [Communities. \(September 2021\)](#)

419 [A Guide to Supporting Engagement and Resiliency in Rural Communities \(Sept 2021\)](#)

420 [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\): Preparedness Resources for Tribes](#)



#### 421 Questions to Consider When Examining Risk and Vulnerability

- 422 ▪ What beliefs and values inform the planning assumptions?
- 423 ▪ How have historical practices and trends led to current conditions, and what could that  
424 mean for the future?
- 425 ▪ What are the historical challenges that this community’s underserved populations face?

- 426
- 427
- What insights do the diverse voices on the planning team bring to understanding the situation?

### 428 2.2.3. DETERMINE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

429 The planning team sets operational priorities during this step of the planning process, along with  
430 goals (or desired outcomes) and objectives (or specific actions) to achieve those priorities. Ensuring  
431 the incorporation of equitable and inclusive considerations into development of goals and objectives  
432 involves taking the knowledge of the situation, such as the needs and priorities of the underserved  
433 communities gained in the “Understand the Situation” step, and using that to shape broader  
434 community priorities, goals, and objectives.



#### 435 Questions to Consider When Identifying Goals and Objectives

- 436
- 437
- 438
- 439
- 440
- 441
- 442
- Do identified goals and objective account for and address the anticipated needs of all members of the jurisdiction?
  - Do the identified objectives help overcome known barriers to access for those unique needs (e.g., limited English proficiency, individuals with access and functional needs, LGBTQ persons, older adults, rural populations)?
  - Do the identified goals and objectives make services to at risk and underserved communities available in an equitable manner?

### 443 2.2.4. DEVELOP THE PLAN

444 Next in the planning process, the planning team identifies, evaluates, and selects the courses of  
445 action that best achieve the priorities, goals, and objectives that the planning team identified. This  
446 includes conducting a thorough evaluation of proposed courses of action in compliance with  
447 applicable laws and including different perspectives. The planning team can look for opportunities to  
448 address current inequities during this evaluation. Tradeoffs are inevitable; by including  
449 considerations for all populations within a community, the planning team can evaluate those  
450 tradeoffs and determine the most feasible and appropriate courses of action to meet the unique  
451 needs identified within the jurisdiction.

452 During this step, the planning team also identifies the resources (e.g., personnel, equipment,  
453 material) needed to implement the plan and determines what resources are available through  
454 existing mechanisms. Ensuring equitable delivery of information, support, and resources to survivors  
455 is key to successful outcomes. Considering capability and resources at various levels of granularity  
456 will help the planning team understand how local governments can best ensure underserved  
457 communities are able to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate an event.



### Questions to Consider When Selecting Courses of Action

458

459  
460

- Has the planning team included diverse perspectives that have led to creative solutions being proposed and considered?

461  
462  
463

- Are the capabilities and resources distributed across the community adequate to be responsive to needs? Are known shortfalls addressed through support of external partners?

464  
465

- How are the impacts of known resource gaps and shortfalls distributed across the jurisdiction and its comprising communities?

466  
467

- Do the planning decisions produce any intentional benefits or unintended consequences for underserved communities?

#### 2.2.5. PREPARE AND REVIEW THE PLAN

468  
469 In this step, the planning team uses the information from the previous four steps to write the plan,  
470 using plain language that avoids jargon and conveys information simply and clearly. Review of the  
471 draft plan may benefit from recommendations, insights, and varied perspective of the diverse  
472 community. The planning team may also consider how to make the final plan widely available,  
473 including publishing in the languages of the community if a significant population has limited English  
474 proficiency, and using community-based organizations to distribute printed copies to those who may  
475 not have reliable internet access. Reference [Appendix D](#) for guidance on ensuring data are  
476 presented accessibly.



### Questions to Consider When Writing the Plan

477

478

- Is the written plan clear, concise, and easy to understand?

479

- Is the plan written in a way that reflects the needs of the whole community?

480

- Are diverse voices part of the team reviewing the plan for adequacy, acceptability, completeness, and compliance?

481

#### 2.2.6. IMPLEMENT AND MAINTAIN THE PLAN

482  
483 The planning process does not end with the completion of the written plan. Plans are socialized  
484 through training, exercises, and other outreach activities in this last step of the planning process.  
485 The planning team can use existing trusted structures to reach underserved communities and  
486 engage them in training, exercising, and implementing the plan. The planning team can establish a  
487 process for tracking implementation and evaluating and updating the plan on a regular basis with an  
488 emphasis on meeting the needs of various populations within the community. Most importantly, the

489 planning team can consider how it plans to stay engaged with underserved communities and  
490 maintain relationships developed through the planning process.



### 491 Questions to Consider When Implementing and Maintaining the Plan

- 492     ▪ Has the planning team provided underserved communities with meaningful opportunities  
493     for continued involvement? Have they engaged communities to coordinate or participate in  
494     exercises?
- 495     ▪ How does the planning team keep the trust it has built?
- 496     ▪ How will the planning team monitor and evaluate equitable outcomes resulting from the  
497     plan and build consideration of it into the continuous improvement program?
- 498     ▪ Are the plans and supporting materials accessible in the languages that the community  
499     uses?



### 500 Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility in Exercises

501 FEMA released the [Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility in Exercises: Considerations](#)  
502 [and Best Practices Guide](#) in May 2023 to help exercise program managers and exercise  
503 planning team members recognize and include multiple distinct stakeholder perspectives,  
504 concerns and characteristics. The guide is consistent with the Homeland Security Exercise and  
505 Evaluation Program (HSEEP), which provides a flexible, scalable, and adaptable approach for  
506 planning and conducting exercises.

507

## 508 **3. Community Engagement**

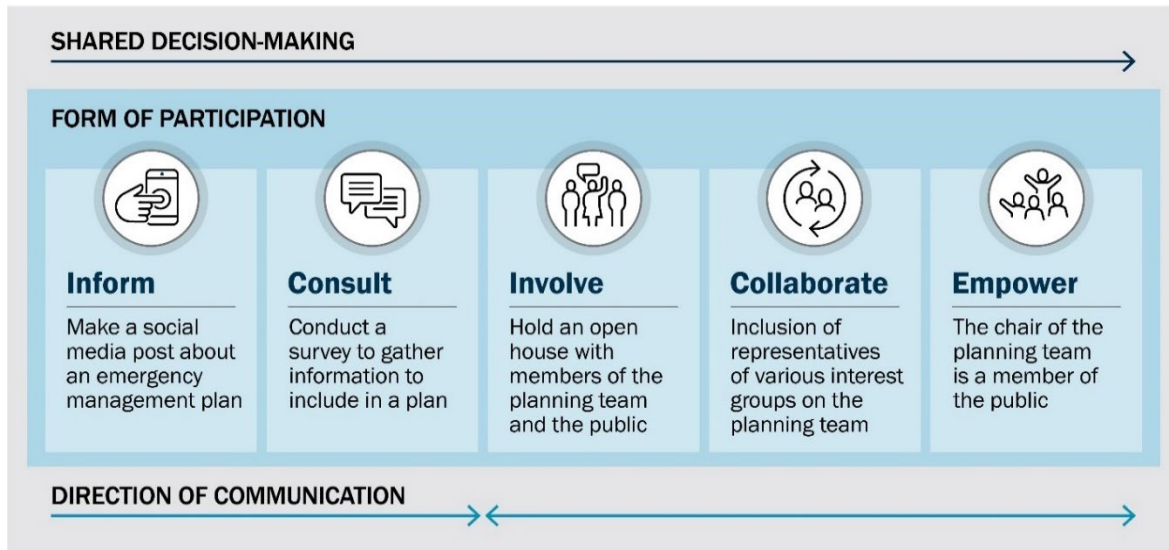
509 This section provides methods of incorporating whole community participation into planning  
510 processes with an emphasis on providing meaningful opportunities for underserved populations to  
511 participate.

### 512 **3.1. Understanding Forms of Community Engagement**

513 Engaging with community members is critical to successful planning by emergency managers. The  
514 planning team may need to use multiple lenses to understand and engage with all aspects of their  
515 community. Leveraging the expertise of your community to understand the current circumstances  
516 and potential needs of underserved populations within a community is the most direct way to build  
517 partnerships and begin to meet the needs of the whole community. [Appendix A](#) provides community  
518 snapshots that outline various underserved communities that may be relevant to your population.  
519 Using these community snapshots to begin building your community-specific lens, as well as talking  
520 with community members to understand their experiences and challenges, will help ensure that all  
521 planning products are written to address the needs and challenges of your community's population.

522 Emergency managers can use community participation models to choose the right form of  
523 engagement based on the situation and the purpose of the engagement. The International  
524 Association for Public Participation (IAP2) developed a Spectrum of Public Participation (Figure 4 )  
525 based on multiple forms of community engagement. All modes have value and should be selected to  
526 match the context of the engagement. The spectrum begins with the least collaborative form of  
527 engagement: inform or one-way communication, where the emergency manager informs the public  
528 but does not request feedback. An example of this would be sending alerts and warnings or  
529 distributing preparedness information. Next is consult, where input on an issue is gathered from  
530 community members but there is no active participation in subsequent decision-making by the  
531 community members. The first two forms involve informing and/or informing and gathering feedback  
532 on decisions that have already been made or are further along in development. Community  
533 members have more influence in decision-making in the other three forms of engagement on the  
534 spectrum. Involvement requires that the public is more engaged in providing their own concerns and  
535 needs that directly influence decision-making. Fourth is collaboration, which is a partnership and  
536 there is shared decision-making between the emergency manager and the public. The final form of  
537 participating is empowering the public to make the decision, which emergency managers then  
538 implement.





539

540

**Figure 4. IAPC's Public Participation Spectrum<sup>19</sup>**

541

If emergency managers rely too heavily on the one-way, prescriptive modes of communication, they will miss opportunities for meaningful, sustained engagement that is needed to build trust between public officials and community partners. Engagement also must be consistent over time and not done just during the crisis time of a disaster.<sup>20</sup>

545

It is often easier for people with more time and resources to attend meetings or otherwise provide input. For instance, neighborhood groups like homeowners' associations are often an efficient forum for engagement. However, many members of underserved populations, whether low-income or rural populations, do not live in neighborhoods with a homeowners' association and may not be reached using this strategy.<sup>21</sup> Lack of engagement or participation by members of underserved communities does not mean lack of interest. Instead, emergency managers may need to identify what accommodations are needed to make the process inclusive of all populations and remove barriers to participation.

552

<sup>19</sup> Graphic adapted with permission from ©International Association for Public Participation [www.iap2.org](http://www.iap2.org).

<sup>20</sup> American Planning Association, *Planning for Equity Policy Guide*. May 2019. Accessed June 12, 2023. <https://planning.org/publications/document/9178541/>.

<sup>21</sup> National Council of La Raza, *Emergency Managers Tool Kit: Meeting the Needs of Latino Communities*. 2011. Accessed June 12, 2023. <https://unidosus.org/publications/382-emergency-managers-tool-kit-meeting-the-needs-of-latino-communities/>. [https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/sites/default/files/public/pho/26997/Emergency\\_Managers\\_Tool\\_Kit\\_-\\_Meeting\\_the\\_Needs\\_of\\_Latino\\_Communities\\_0.pdf](https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/sites/default/files/public/pho/26997/Emergency_Managers_Tool_Kit_-_Meeting_the_Needs_of_Latino_Communities_0.pdf)

553 **3.2. Engagement in Planning Best Practices**

554 Community participation in planning processes is critical to ensuring that preferences and priorities  
555 that reflect the whole community can be fully integrated into plans and projects, and they are also  
556 critical to creating buy-in and support for initiatives.<sup>22</sup> However, having an inclusive planning process,  
557 and allowing every interested party to participate, poses logistical, linguistic, and cultural challenges  
558 that must be understood and addressed.<sup>23</sup>

559 Emergency managers can leverage relationships with community and cross-cultural partners to  
560 make participants feel welcome to engage in the planning process.<sup>24</sup> Emergency managers can  
561 identify opportunities for community members to act as full members of the planning process,  
562 including participating in defining the vision and scope of engagement. Emergency managers can  
563 also engage in expectation management discussions with the community so that it is clear what is  
564 within the scope of the plan and what realistic outcomes look like. Throughout the planning process,  
565 it is important to be accountable and transparent about outcomes of engagement and next steps.

566 Effective engagement relies on several key elements. Firstly, it is essential to define the purpose of  
567 engagement to ensure that opportunities for engagement are fruitful and that everyone involved has  
568 a mutual understanding from the outset. Understanding the interests, values, and engagement  
569 possibilities within the community is crucial. Having a basic grasp of your audience and their roles in  
570 planning efforts ensures that engagement opportunities are beneficial for both participants and  
571 planners alike. Ensuring engagement is inclusive and respectful creates a comfortable environment  
572 for attendees, fostering feelings of value and understanding. Reviewing and interpreting engagement  
573 outcomes to identify gaps in who has been reached and trends in the feedback offers clear and  
574 valuable input for the planning process. Applying the results of the engagement through providing  
575 data and information to the planning team for consideration in writing the plan and sharing the  
576 results of the engagement with partners can maximize the usefulness of the engagement efforts.  
577 Finally, reporting feedback aids in improving future engagement opportunities, while evaluating  
578 success and sharing lessons learned continually enhances future engagement strategies.

579 One critical challenge that emergency managers must overcome is providing materials and services  
580 in all relevant languages and in culturally appropriate ways. To do this, emergency managers need to  
581 understand the composition of populations within the community, including the demographics of the  
582 community and, when possible, community assets and resources, relationships, and institutional or  
583 cultural barriers. Emergency managers can ensure that translation is available both for events and

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<sup>22</sup> FEMA, *Guide to Expanding Mitigation: Making the Connection to Equity*. Undated. Accessed June 21, 2023.  
[https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_mitigation-guide\\_equity.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_mitigation-guide_equity.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> Environmental Protection Agency (2022). *Public Participation Guide: Process Planning*. Accessed August 19, 2022.  
<https://www.epa.gov/international-cooperation/public-participation-guide-process-planning>.

<sup>24</sup> FEMA, *Engaging Faith-based and Community Organizations: Planning Considerations for Emergency Managers*. June 2018. Accessed August 19, 2022. [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/fema\\_faith-communities\\_community\\_orgs.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/fema_faith-communities_community_orgs.pdf).

584 written materials and consider how different stakeholder groups may receive the content of  
585 communication and channels used to promote planning engagement events. The cost for these  
586 services should be identified by the emergency manager ahead of the start of the EOP development  
587 or revision process so that any contract services can be coordinated in advance.

588 In addition to making the materials themselves accessible, emergency managers can look for ways to  
589 make sure outreach materials effectively reach their communities; for instance, they can tailor  
590 messages to social media platforms that will best reach the people in the community (e.g., some  
591 social media platforms use visual messages and are favored by young adults; others rely on short  
592 messages and have a more even age distribution). These also may include using trusted agents to  
593 post messages on neighborhood or community forums to reach populations.

594 Emergency managers could consider contacting local nonprofit organizations that work with a wide  
595 variety of community members and involve them in creating outreach materials. Local organizations  
596 such as Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster and Community Organizations Active in Disaster  
597 (VOAD/COAD) may provide a streamlined mechanism for reaching groups that are deeply involved  
598 with a multitude of underserved communities.

599 In addition to taking steps to address cultural and linguistic barriers, emergency managers may  
600 consider potential logistical barriers, including physical, temporal, and transportation-related  
601 barriers.



### 602 Make Meetings Accessible to Diverse Voices

603 Public participation in decision-making often favors the people who have the time and  
604 resources needed to attend meetings, submit comments, and participate in surveys.  
605 Emergency managers may consider what other approaches would make public input processes  
606 more accessible to underserved communities. Examples include the following:<sup>25</sup>

- 607     ▪ Include community liaisons from your community's underserved communities who can  
608       serve as a conduit for needs and concerns.
- 609     ▪ Partner with community-based organizations to identify community members interested in  
610       participating.
- 611     ▪ Arrange onsite childcare.
- 612     ▪ Offer a meal or transportation to the meeting.

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<sup>25</sup> American Flood Coalition and Institute for Diversity and Inclusion in Emergency Management, *Conversations with Communities: Considerations for Equitable Flooding and Disaster Recovery Policy*. March 2021. Accessed June 21, 2023. <https://assets.floodcoalition.org/2021/03/b88b030c7b703699b9e320a07e353aa7-AFC-IDEM-Conversations-With-Communities-Report.pdf>.

- 613     ▪ Host meetings virtually or host them in locations and at times convenient to underserved  
614 communities. If meetings are primarily virtual, ensure there are other methods of  
615 attendance to meet the needs of underserved populations who may struggle with access to  
616 technology.
- 617     ▪ Choose accessible locations both from a transportation access perspective and a disability  
618 perspective and provide appropriate assistive technology or specialized support staff in  
619 addition to any requested reasonable accommodations.
- 620     ▪ Hold multiple events on different days and times for people who have scheduling  
621 challenges.
- 622     ▪ Ensure all communication (written and verbal) is in plain language, available in multiple  
623 languages and accessible to people with disabilities.

### 624 3.3. Whole Community Partnerships

625 Community-based and social service organizations serve communities within jurisdictions that may  
626 have relevance to a people first-focused planning process approach. Some of these communities  
627 include immigrants or people with limited English proficiency, people experiencing homelessness,  
628 low-income individuals, older adults, children, and people with disabilities. Community organization  
629 partners can help reach and engage these populations to ensure that their needs are met and that  
630 their resources can be leveraged.

631 Partnerships with faith-based organizations can also help engage hard-to-reach communities within  
632 jurisdictions. FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security's Center for Faith-Based and  
633 Neighborhood Partnerships have produced a guide on [Engaging Faith-Based and Community  
634 Organizations](#). Faith-based organizations can help emergency managers access and build trust with  
635 religiously, economically, racially, and ethnically diverse communities within a jurisdiction. These  
636 organizations may have specific resources that can be included in emergency management plans,  
637 including communications support, sheltering facilities, feeding operations, and health care.<sup>26</sup>



#### 638 How Do You Build and/or Restore Community Trust?

- 639     ▪ Engage with and listen to the community, be open to understanding their firsthand  
640 experiences and incorporate community input whenever appropriate.
- 641     ▪ Have the necessary difficult conversations.
- 642     ▪ Mirror the diversity of the community you're engaging with.

<sup>26</sup> FEMA, *Engaging Faith-based and Community Organizations: Planning Considerations for Emergency Managers*. June 2018. Accessed August 19, 2022. [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/fema\\_faith-communities\\_community\\_orgs.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-03/fema_faith-communities_community_orgs.pdf).

- 643     ▪ Work with partners who the community already trusts.
- 644     ▪ Meet people where they are and engage stakeholders firsthand.
- 645     ▪ Bring resources, not words.
- 646     ▪ Do not make promises you cannot keep.
- 647     ▪ Celebrate small wins.

648 Private sector partners may be engaged during the planning process and/or during plan  
649 implementation. Private-public partnerships (P3s) are “any type of collaboration between private and  
650 public organizations to coordinate prior to, during and after a disaster affecting their jurisdiction.”<sup>27</sup>  
651 P3s recognize the interdependence of the public and private sectors in delivering services to  
652 communities, and they can help address hazard-related community concerns, including  
653 infrastructure and supply chains, resilient community lifelines, and health and safety assets. Working  
654 with private partners can expand the network of stakeholders involved in planning processes and  
655 improving access to resources. At the core, a P3 connects people, builds relationships, and breaks  
656 down barriers so that representatives from private, nongovernmental, and public organizations know  
657 each other prior to an incident affecting their jurisdiction. The activities of the P3 typically grow in  
658 complexity as the partnership matures; early-state P3s often focus on information sharing, while  
659 more mature P3s may undertake joint projects such as economic development. The jurisdiction’s  
660 need drives the complexity of the P3. FEMA has created [Building Private-Public Partnerships](#), a guide  
661 that focuses on creating and maintaining these relationships.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> FEMA, *Building Private-Public Partnerships*. July 2021. Accessed August 19, 2022.  
[https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_building-private-public-partnerships.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_building-private-public-partnerships.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

## 662 4. Conclusion

663 Putting people first requires emergency managers to want to deeply understand their communities  
664 and the varying needs and challenges of those within it. Being open to learning about historical  
665 context, hearing personal stories, experiences, and concerns from neighbors, and working with them  
666 to create plans, policies, and programs that truly make a positive impact for diverse neighbors, is the  
667 central goal.



### 668 Takeaways for Emergency Managers

- 669 ▪ To improve outcomes and build resilience for communities, emergency managers can work  
670 with leadership to ensure a people-first approach has the time and resources needed to  
671 effectively implement and maintain changes.
- 672 ▪ Emergency managers need to understand the limitations of the data and methodologies  
673 they use and how those limitations can be overcome.
- 674 ▪ Emergency managers can foster effective participation so those most impacted by  
675 disasters can begin to inform long-term decision-making and access critical resources.
- 676 ▪ Emergency managers should avoid assuming that lack of engagement or participation by a  
677 particular portion of the jurisdiction means lack of interest.
- 678 ▪ Emergency managers can implement active engagement techniques, including working  
679 one-on-one and in small groups, as well as leveraging partnerships with businesses, non-  
680 profits, and faith-based organizations, which can improve participation both with the  
681 community-at-large and with underserved communities.
- 682 ▪ Emergency managers can ensure that translation is available both for events and written  
683 materials, and they should also consider how different stakeholder groups may receive the  
684 content of communication and channels used to promote planning engagement events.
- 685 ▪ Emergency managers can engage with local nonprofit organizations that work with a wide  
686 variety of community members and involve them in creating outreach materials.

## 687 Appendix A: Community Snapshots

688 FEMA has developed a series of community snapshots that give emergency managers suggested  
689 planning considerations, strategic questions, and resources to help learn more about specific  
690 segments of the population. These fact sheets can be found on FEMA's website and are included in  
691 this document.

### 692 Children & Youth

#### 693 COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

694 Children comprise approximately 25% of our Nation's population. The following include unique  
695 considerations related to youth and children that emergency managers and stakeholders should  
696 account for when developing and updating disaster preparedness, response, and recovery plans.

- 697 ▪ On any given weekday, nearly 69 million children and youth are away from their parents and  
698 caregivers at childcare, school, medical, juvenile justice, or recreational facilities. This can create  
699 challenges for disaster preparedness planning and crisis communications.
- 700 ▪ Families may face barriers to accessing shelters if their children require age-appropriate  
701 supplies, such as infant formula or diapers. Governmental or other organizations responsible for  
702 the provision of these supplies may be necessary partners to ensure families feel comfortable  
703 accessing shelters with their children.
- 704 ▪ Children at different ages have different needs. They also may have intersectional needs such as  
705 a disability, language, and access needs, live in a rural community or within foster-care and have  
706 very different systems of support available to them. Consider all these needs when developing  
707 disaster messaging and resources for children and the institutions and systems that reach them.
- 708 ▪ Children and youth are less likely to understand disaster and emergency situations and often  
709 have less experience coping with very stressful situations. Disaster preparedness language  
710 should be age appropriate. Older children can be involved in the preparedness process, in an  
711 age-appropriate way, to increase their confidence and awareness.



#### 712 Strategic Questions – Children and Youth

713 Families, children, and youth in your area may face additional or different challenges. The  
714 following strategic questions can help guide your understanding and engagement with the  
715 families, children, and youth in your area.

- 716 ▪ Has your community experienced a significant emergency or disaster that impacted child-  
717 serving organizations, including schools and childcare centers?
- 718 ▪ If so, how were services quickly reestablished so that parents could return to work?

- 719     ▪ How can you effectively communicate risks to children and youth and involve them in  
720     planning and recovery processes?
- 721     ▪ What kinds of disasters are most likely in your area?
- 722     ▪ How can teachers and caregivers with previous disaster experience share their experience  
723     and practices?
- 724     ▪ Do you currently have relationships with child-serving organizations to guide the  
725     development of comprehensive emergency preparedness plans?

726     Comprehensive plans should address any challenges, including the transport of critically  
727     injured children to medical facilities outside of a given jurisdiction, coordinating with law  
728     enforcement to establish evacuation and reunification plans, and collaborating with disability  
729     experts to ensure that plans are inclusive.

### 730     **EXAMPLES OF PLANNING IN ACTION**

731     This section provides suggestions for you to consider when incorporating the needs of children,  
732     youth, and families into whole community emergency preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.  
733     These actions help to lessen disaster response and recovery efforts, expedite individual and  
734     community recovery, and stabilize the economy.

- 735     ▪ Encourage temporary care facilities, such as health care, childcare, and educational facilities, to  
736     develop emergency preparedness, response, and recovery plans in collaboration with local  
737     emergency managers and other key stakeholders.
- 738     ○ These plans can include practicing evacuation and sheltering procedures, making  
739     reunification plans with parents and caregivers, and ensuring first aid kits and supplies are  
740     stocked to meet all children’s needs. Plans should consider the physical, mental, and legal  
741     differences between children and adults.
- 742     ▪ Share resources and communication materials that provide age-appropriate disaster  
743     preparedness and response instructions for children, so they learn about disaster risks and how  
744     to respond to emergencies.
- 745     ○ These materials can involve children in the planning process and help them process their  
746     emotions during and after a disaster as they are likely to be frightened, confused, and  
747     insecure.
- 748     ▪ Explore the idea of appointing a Children’s Liaison or Coordinator into emergency management  
749     efforts.
- 750     ○ This role could include streamlining communications and the provision of resources through  
751     applicable governmental organizations such as the Departments of Health, Children and



752 Families, Education, Housing, Justice, Environmental Protection, private sector, and non-  
753 governmental organizations.

- 754 ▪ Collaborate with local partners to address resource gaps and maintain a pre-disaster mechanism  
755 for acquiring age-appropriate supplies, such as formula, bottles, diapers, books, and toys.



## Other Resource – Children and Youth

757 [Ready Kids](#)

758 [Youth Preparedness Council](#)

759 [Comprehensive Preparedness Guide \(CPG\) 101: Developing and Maintaining Emergency](#)  
760 [Operations Plans](#)

761 [IS-0366.a: Planning for the Needs of Children in Disasters - Course Overview](#)

762 [Community Preparedness: Integrating the Needs of Children](#)

763 [Guide for Developing High Quality School Emergency Operation Plans \(EOP\)](#)

764 [Emergency Planning for Juvenile Justice Residential Facilities](#)

765 [Post-Disaster Reunification of Children: A Nationwide Approach](#)

766

## 767 **Individuals with Disabilities**

### 768 **COMMUNITY OVERVIEW**

769 Ensuring that members of the disability community have the same access to resources as other  
770 survivors can best be ensured through planning and coordination to anticipate barriers in the  
771 disaster response and recovery processes.

772 People with disabilities may use aids and services such as, sign language, mobility aids, wheelchairs,  
773 sensory-friendly environments, service animals, or personal care attendants to help facilitate their  
774 independence, daily living, and community participation before disasters. The following describes  
775 some considerations for the disability community:

- 776     ▪ Broad communication methods and messaging may be inaccessible to members of the disability  
777       community.
  - 778         ○ Disaster warnings, alerts, and updates are not always accessible to people with sensory  
779           overload or communication needs.
  - 780         ○ Communication and assistive aids that are not 508-compliant, available in multiple  
781           languages, configured with accessibility in mind (e.g., screen readers), or available to  
782           facilitate access to the FEMA registration process represent barriers to communication for  
783           people with disabilities.
- 784     ▪ People with disabilities often experience medical and mobility challenges that make it more  
785       difficult to evacuate or find a shelter that meets their health or accessibility needs. Some  
786       survivors may be homebound and unable to access resources or services.
  - 787         ○ Lack of access to clean water and foods that meet special dietary needs threatens the  
788           hygiene and health of people with certain chronic medical conditions.
  - 789         ○ Power outages present a life-threatening situation for people on kidney dialysis, oxygen,  
790           ventilators, and people who rely on powered prosthetic devices. People who are deaf or hard  
791           of hearing and require light to read lips or communicate through sign language are also  
792           impacted by low light or power outages.
- 793     ▪ Registering to receive timely and complete disaster assistance may be more difficult for people  
794       with sensory, cognitive, or physical disabilities due to mobility, communication, administrative, or  
795       procedural barriers.
- 796     ▪ Inequality throughout the disaster cycle can disrupt a return to pre-disaster independence and  
797       community participation.



## Strategic Questions – Disability Community

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People with disabilities may face additional or different challenges than the general survivor population. Use the following strategic questions to guide your understanding and engagement with your local disability community stakeholders:

802

- What does the disability community look like in your locality?

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- Are there any features or challenges unique to your area that may have a significant impact on people with disabilities (e.g., structural community inaccessibility, lack of accessible housing, few to no accessible public transportation options, shortage of personal care attendants, sign language interpreters)?

807

808

- Have you previously provided the disability community the opportunity to meaningfully contribute to disaster planning efforts?

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- If yes, was a cross-section of disabilities represented (e.g., blind, deaf, mobility, developmental, cognitive, psychosocial)?

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- What are the disability community's current barriers to accessing routine and emergency critical resources?

813

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- What information sources does the community trust? What local and state organizations, nonprofits, and agencies currently have strong relationships with the disability community?

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816

- What local and state organizations, nonprofits, and agencies are positioned to engage and assist survivors with disabilities during and after disasters?

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- For example, local Centers for Independent Living, Developmental Disabilities Councils, Area Agencies on Aging, and Protection & Advocacy Systems.

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## EXAMPLES OF PLANNING IN ACTION

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This section includes opportunities to incorporate lessons learned about people with disabilities in your community into your planning efforts to foster more equitable and inclusive engagement.

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- Foster relationships with community-based organizations that work with the disability community to educate individuals on risks, help them create personalized disaster plans, and connect them to medical, mobility, shelter, language, and transportation resources during and after a disaster.

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- Trusted organizations and leaders can include disability service agencies, advocacy organizations, caregivers, congregate living spaces, and other local organizations.

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- Create emergency management resources and information that is accessible and available in multiple modes. This includes, but is not limited to, live captions, braille translations, accessible fonts, and screen reader accessibility.

- 830   ▪ Include the disability community in emergency planning to support preparedness and recovery  
831   actions that consider full structural accessibility and the needs of people with a wide range of  
832   disability-related needs.
- 833   ○ Support community engagement by planning meetings in accessible buildings, providing  
834   language assistance and communication aids, and utilizing multiple feedback methods.
- 835   ▪ Support individuals who are homebound by developing plans that share emergency contact  
836   information, document their specific needs, and plan for support during an emergency.
- 837   ○ For example, collect phone numbers and addresses for community members who are most  
838   likely to require wellness checks during power outages.
- 839   ▪ Ensure that transportation, shelters, and post-disaster housing options are accessible and meet  
840   the needs of the people with disabilities or other access and functional needs in your community.
- 841   ○ Support co-habitation with families, personal care attendants, and service animals.
- 842   ○ Ensure bathrooms and common areas are accessible for wheelchairs, walkers, and other  
843   mobility supports.
- 844   ▪ Create supports to access life-sustaining medical care, prescribed medications, refrigeration for  
845   certain medications (e.g., insulin, chemotherapy drugs), and medications to prevent an  
846   exacerbation of serious conditions (e.g., heart, psychotropic, immunodeficiency).
- 847   ○ Share information on how to fill prescriptions before a disaster.
- 848   ○ Ensure shelters have refrigeration or provide generators in the case of a power outage.
- 849   ▪ Leverage data sources such as the U.S. Census, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
850   (CDC) Social Vulnerability Index, and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)  
851   emPOWER Program data to learn more about disability demographics in your community.



### Other Resource – Disability Community

- 852
- 853   [Office of Disability Integration and Coordination | FEMA.gov](#)
- 854   [People with Disabilities | Ready.gov](#)
- 855   [Guide to Expanding Mitigation: Making the Connection to People with Disabilities](#)
- 856   [At-Risk Individuals \(hhs.gov\)](#)
- 857   [The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Section 504 | U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)  
858   [\(hhs.gov\)](#)

- 859 [Community Living and Olmstead | HHS.gov](#)
- 860 [The Americans with Disabilities Act | ADA.gov](#)
- 861 [Disability Data \(census.gov\)](#)
- 862 [CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index \(SVI\)](#)
- 863 [HHS emPOWER Program](#)
- 864 [Disaster Preparedness Guide for Older Adults](#)
- 865 [Disaster Preparedness Guide for Caregivers](#)
- 866

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## 867 Language Access

### 868 COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

869 People with language barriers, also known as limited English proficiency, are likely to be  
870 disproportionately impacted by disasters due to challenges with understanding emergency  
871 messaging and information. It is important to understand the language needs and unique  
872 characteristics of underserved communities that may be present in your area, so you can adequately  
873 address these when developing and updating plans. The following describes considerations for  
874 addressing needs of people with language barriers:

- 875     ▪ People with language barriers are less likely to respond to emergency alerts, warnings, and  
876     evacuation orders because information may not reach them if not provided through trusted  
877     channels or in a language they understand. Not everyone in the population will receive critical,  
878     life-sustaining information and may lack basic understanding in an emergency.
- 879     ▪ History, cultural background, and migratory status of some members of this community may  
880     influence willingness to seek or receive aid from government officials.
- 881     ▪ Language barriers limit access to available resources and services. Groups with language  
882     barriers may not know the location of shelters, food, or other critical resources in an emergency.  
883     Lack of in-language information further hinders survivors from accessing resources and  
884     assistance programs after a disaster.
- 885     ▪ Populations with language barriers have been historically underserved, marginalized, and lack  
886     the economic resources to prepare and recover. A low-income limits access to transportation,  
887     funds to pay for emergency housing, use of smartphones, and internet access. Economic  
888     recovery is further hindered due to lack of access to resources necessary to get back on their  
889     feet.



### 890 Strategic Questions – Language Access

891 People with language barriers in your area may face additional or different challenges during  
892 an emergency. The following questions may help in guiding your understanding and  
893 engagement with these groups within your community:

- 894     ▪ What is the demographic profile of this population? Do you know which languages are  
895     spoken within your community?
- 896     ▪ Are there other linguistic and regional dialects among those groups (e.g., indigenous  
897     languages, Spanish speakers from Mexico, Spanish speakers from Puerto Rico)?
- 898     ▪ What resources are available in your community to communicate with limited English  
899     proficiency groups? How will you scale up or leverage resources to meet language access

- 900 needs in an emergency or evacuation? Are there local interpretation and translation  
901 companies that you can leverage?
- 902 ▪ How do you engage with limited English proficiency groups? How do these groups prefer to  
903 get information? Are there trusted communicators within the community?
  - 904 ▪ What are historical, economic, and cultural characteristics of underserved groups within  
905 your community? How might cultural background and/or life experiences impact your  
906 community during an emergency?
  - 907 ▪ What is the community's experience working with local government agencies? Are there  
908 language or culture barriers to understanding processes or personnel? How can these  
909 barriers be addressed?

## 910 **EXAMPLES OF PLANNING IN ACTION**

911 This section provides ideas for emergency managers and community leaders to consider when  
912 establishing a foundation for incorporating the disaster related needs of people with language  
913 barriers in their communities.

- 914 ▪ Learn the demographic profile for members of your community. Provide emergency messaging  
915 and instructions in languages that mirror the diversity of your community.
- 916 ▪ Identify local interpretation and translation companies that can support language services,  
917 including translation of vital documents, in your area. Establish relationships with these  
918 companies before disaster strikes to ensure services can be provided quickly.
- 919 ▪ Identify and foster relationships with local volunteer, nonprofit, and faith-based organizations  
920 within your community who can assist people with language barriers in emergencies.
- 921 ▪ Engage diverse community members in discussions and planning. Make these activities  
922 accessible by providing interpreters and/or translated materials.
- 923 ▪ Learn how underserved groups with language barriers prefer to receive emergency information.  
924 Keep in mind that traditional and social media platforms are not always the best way to reach  
925 these groups.
- 926 ▪ Learn about the history, patterns of discrimination, and cultural characteristics of the  
927 populations within your community—cultural awareness will lead to increased trust and  
928 collaboration.

929



Other Resource – Language Access

930

931

[Limited English Proficiency - LEP.gov](#)

932

[American Community Survey Data and Language Maps – LEP.gov](#)

933

[FEMA in Your Language | FEMA.gov](#)

934

[Preparedness information in multiple languages – Ready.gov](#)

935

[I Speak Cards and other language identification resources](#)

936

[Comprehensive Preparedness Guide \(CPG\) 101](#)

937

[Executive Order 13166 – Improving Access to Services for People with Limited English](#)

938

[Proficiency](#)

939

[DHS Language Access Plan 2023](#)

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941 **LGBTQ+ Community**

942 **COMMUNITY OVERVIEW**

943 The needs of the LGBTQ+ community must be carefully considered before, during, and after  
944 disasters due in part to pre-existing marginalization before disasters. The following describes some  
945 unique considerations for the LGBTQ+ community:

- 946     ▪ LGBTQ+ communities are overrepresented in populations most impacted by disasters, such as  
947     the unhoused, those who are low-income, and those with chronic illnesses<sup>29</sup> and disabilities<sup>30</sup>.  
948     This intersectionality creates heightened disaster risk for this community.
  - 949         ○ An estimated 2.5 million people were displaced by weather-related disasters in 2023, with  
950         rates of displacement highest for communities facing discrimination and lacking political  
951         power, such as LGBTQ+ individuals.<sup>31</sup>
  - 952         ▪ LGBTQ+ people often experience “disaster before disaster,” meaning they experience hardships  
953         in their day-to-day lives that are exacerbated during disasters.
  - 954         ▪ The LGBTQ+ community may also face barriers in accessing aid.
    - 955             ○ Many in the LGBTQ+ community face barriers to accessing shelters. It is not clear which  
956             shelters are welcoming, safe, and gender-affirming spaces. LGBTQ+ families also may not be  
957             recognized by shelters.
    - 958             ○ LGBTQ+ individuals’ names may not match their legal documents, making access to shelters  
959             or financial assistance difficult or impossible.
    - 960             ○ Given the intersectionality present in this community, many LGBTQ+ persons have more than  
961             one identity, often from other socially vulnerable groups, which can make the impacts of a  
962             disaster even more devastating.
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<sup>29</sup> [Out for Sustainability. Inclusive and Equitable Emergency Management for LGBTQIA+ Communities \(June 2023\).](#)

<sup>30</sup> [GLAAD Media Reference Guide 11<sup>th</sup> Edition: LGBTQ People with Disabilities](#)

<sup>31</sup> The New York Times:



## Strategic Questions – LGBTQ+ Community

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LGBTQ+ individuals in your area may face additional or different challenges. Use the following strategic questions to guide your understanding and engagement with your local LGBTQ+ community:

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- Are there any features unique to your area, such as disasters or risks, that may have a significant impact on the LGBTQ+ community?
- What are the community’s barriers to accessing resources?
- Has the community previously faced challenges in disaster preparedness and response? How was that experience?
- What information sources does the community trust?
- What organizations, nonprofits, and agencies does the community currently have strong relationships with?

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### EXAMPLES OF PLANNING IN ACTION

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This section includes ways that you can incorporate lessons learned about your local LGBTQ+ community into your planning efforts to foster more equitable and inclusive engagement.

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- Empower local, trusted LGBTQ+ community-based organizations and leaders as disaster preparedness message ambassadors throughout the disaster planning cycle.
  - Organizations and leaders can include local LGBTQ+ community centers, libraries, bookstores, or drag performers.
  - Trusted community-based organizations can direct community members to additional services to aid recovery.
- Seek opportunities to connect with community-based organizations trusted by the LGBTQ+ community and help them understand how they can be a resource after a disaster.
  - Provide training, such as Until Help Arrives, to increase community preparedness and resilience.
- Uplift voices within the community by gathering stories and data regarding disaster and emergency preparedness.
- Regularly participate in events and remembrances during Pride month, but also on Transgender Visibility Day, Coming Out Day, Transgender Day of Remembrance, World AIDS Day, and other dates important to the community.

- 995     ▪ Consider the specific healthcare, accessibility, and other needs that LGBTQ+ people might need  
996     access to.
- 997     ▪ Provide financial and in-kind resources for LGBTQ+ organizations to be resilient before, during,  
998     and after disasters.
- 999     ▪ Examine religious exemptions to understand how religious freedoms may be evoked to limit  
1000    services to LGBTQ+ individuals.
- 1001    ▪ Foster interagency collaboration, where possible, to share best practices, reduce redundancy,  
1002    and leverage capacity and funding.
  - 1003       ○ For example, share with partners the ways this community may experience discrimination or  
1004       barriers before, during, and after a disaster if an individual’s legal name does not match their  
1005       chosen name.
- 1006    ▪ Incorporate safety signaling (i.e., make statements or publicly display symbols of allyship) into  
1007    communications and programs to demonstrate to the LGBTQ+ community that the organization  
1008    is safe and welcoming.
  - 1009       ○ For example, emphasize when shelters have accessible all-gender bathrooms.
  - 1010       ○ Include pronouns on materials, when possible, to demonstrate an inclusive and safe space  
1011       for all members of the community.



### Other Resource – LGBTQ+ Community

1013    [Out for Sustainability. Inclusive and Equitable Emergency Management for LGBTQIA+ Communities](#)  
1014    [\(June 2023\).](#)

1015    [Human Rights Campaign. LGBTQ+ Americans Under Attack: A Report and Reflection on the 2023](#)  
1016    [State Legislative Session \(June 2023\).](#)

1017    [Human Rights Campaign. LGBTQ+ Americans Fight Back: A Guidebook for Action.](#)

1018    [Goldsmith, L., Raditz, V., & Méndez, M. Queer and Present Danger: Understanding the Disparate](#)  
1019    [Impacts of Disasters on LGBTQ+ Communities. \(September 2021\).](#)

1020

1021 **Older Adults**

1022 **COMMUNITY OVERVIEW**

1023 Older adults are likely to be disproportionately impacted by disasters and are often at a higher risk of  
1024 injury and death due to a combination of communication, health and mobility, and resource barriers.

1025 The following describe some unique considerations for older adults:

- 1026 ▪ Older adults may be less experienced or comfortable with smartphones, applications, and  
1027 internet-based emergency alerts. These tools are important for preparing for a disaster and  
1028 knowing how to respond when an emergency is occurring.
- 1029 ▪ Older adults often experience medical, mobility, and disability challenges that make it more  
1030 difficult to evacuate or find a shelter that meets their health or accessibility needs.
- 1031 ▪ Older adults frequently live on fixed incomes, which may limit their access to resources. They  
1032 may need additional assistance finding free and affordable preparedness resources and  
1033 accessing aid after a disaster.
- 1034 ▪ Older adults often have community knowledge of previous disasters, experience working with  
1035 community partners, and a desire to maintain independence that can be leveraged for disaster  
1036 preparedness.



**Strategic Questions – Older Adults**

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1038 Older adults in your area may face additional or different challenges. Use the following  
1039 strategic questions to guide your understanding and engagement with your community:

- 1040 ▪ Do the older adults in the community face additional barriers, such as disability, limited  
1041 English proficiency, or limited resources, that affect their plans to prepare for, respond to  
1042 and recover from a disaster?
- 1043 ▪ Are there any features unique to your area, such as frequent disasters or being in a rural  
1044 area, that may have a significant impact on older adults?
- 1045 ▪ Has the community previously faced challenges in disaster preparedness and response?  
1046 How was that experience?
- 1047 ▪ What information sources do older adults trust? How do these sources' channels and  
1048 messaging reach older adults?
- 1049 ▪ What organizations, nonprofits, and agencies do older adults currently have strong  
1050 relationships with?

1051 **EXAMPLES OF PLANNING IN ACTION**

1052 This section includes ways that you can incorporate the lessons learned about older adults in your  
1053 community into your planning efforts to foster more equitable and inclusive engagement.

- 1054     ▪ Foster relationships with community-based organizations that work with older adults that can  
1055       educate older adults on new emergency risks, help them to create personalized disaster plans,  
1056       and connect them to medical and transportation resources during a disaster.
  - 1057         ○ Trusted organizations and leaders can include Area Agencies on Aging, Adult Protective  
1058            Services, assisted living communities and nursing homes, houses of worship, and caregivers.
- 1059     ▪ Support older adult participation in community planning and decision making by ensuring their  
1060       input is heard.
  - 1061         ○ This may include emergency managers and planners going to assisted living facilities,  
1062            nursing homes, or community-based organizations that work with older adults to engage  
1063            older adults in disaster preparedness discussions as well as providing virtual options or  
1064            transportation support to community engagement events.
- 1065     ▪ Develop a communications plan to reach older adults without smartphones, such as using  
1066       emergency alert systems on the radio and television stations or connecting them with  
1067       Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) and neighborhood watches.
- 1068     ▪ Ensure emergency and congregate shelters are accessible and support older adults' needs.
  - 1069         ○ For example, bathrooms are accessible for wheelchairs, walkers, and other mobility supports,  
1070            and there are accommodations for service animals.
- 1071     ▪ Empower older adults to assess their physical, medical, and support needs and create strategies  
1072       with their caregivers and support networks to prepare for disasters by engaging them in  
1073       conversations about their experiences, knowledge, and concerns. Provide resources like  
1074       worksheets and checklists to create digital and print copies of their needs to share with first  
1075       responders.  
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Other Resource – Older Adults

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[FEMA Ready Campaign for Older Adults](#)

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[Disaster Preparedness Guide for Older Adults](#)

1081

[Disaster Preparedness Guide for Caregivers](#)

1082

[AARP](#)

1083

[Aging and Disability Resource Centers](#)

1084

[National Association for Area Agencies on Aging](#)

1085

[Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers](#)

1086

[Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers' Disaster Preparedness Toolkit for Caregivers of](#)

1087

[Veterans](#)

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## 1089 Rural Communities

### 1090 COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

1091 Rural areas face challenges and have strengths that are distinct from urban settings. These unique  
1092 characteristics should be referenced to help inform disaster preparedness and response efforts. The  
1093 following considerations can help inform planning efforts in rural areas:

- 1094     ▪ Rural areas typically have fewer healthcare facilities, emergency services, and support systems,  
1095         making it difficult to access necessary care and assistance during disasters.
- 1096     ▪ The geographic isolation of many rural communities can hinder emergency response efforts and  
1097         delay recovery. Isolation also contributes to difficulties in accessing information and resources.
- 1098     ▪ The isolation of rural communities may be so extensive that certain rural areas do not utilize  
1099         traditional addresses or, road names, house numbers etc. This may further delay emergency  
1100         response efforts or may cause additional issues accessing resources.
- 1101     ▪ Many rural economies are dependent on agriculture, mining, and other industries susceptible to  
1102         disruption following a disaster, leading to long-term economic challenges.
- 1103     ▪ Rural areas often have higher proportions of older residents who may require specialized support  
1104         during disasters, including healthcare, transportation, and social services.
- 1105     ▪ Infrastructure in rural areas, including roads, bridges, and communication networks, may be less  
1106         developed or maintained, increasing vulnerability to disaster impacts.
- 1107     ▪ Rural communities often exhibit strong bonds of community cohesion and resilience, and these  
1108         strengths should be leveraged in planning and response efforts to enhance outcomes.



### 1109 Strategic Questions – Rural Communities

1110 Rural communities are not a monolith, and planning considerations should not be seen as  
1111 “one-size-fits-all.” Engagement with rural communities should be guided by strategic questions  
1112 that consider their unique challenges and strengths:

- 1113     ▪ What are the specific vulnerabilities of this rural area to disasters, and how can these be  
1114         mitigated?
- 1115     ▪ How can disaster response and recovery plans be adapted to address the geographical  
1116         and infrastructural challenges of rural areas?
- 1117     ▪ What strategies can support continuity of the rural economy, particularly in agriculture,  
1118         forestry, and mining, following a disaster?

- 1119     ▪ In what ways can the needs of vulnerable populations, including older adults and those  
1120     with limited access to transportation and housing, be addressed?
- 1121     ▪ What are the most effective channels and methods for communicating with rural  
1122     communities before, during, and after disasters?
- 1123     ▪ How have rural communities in your area previously responded to disasters, and what  
1124     lessons can be learned from these experiences?
- 1125     ▪ What organizations, nonprofits, and agencies do you have strong relationships with? Is  
1126     there Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) and/or Memorandums of Understanding  
1127     (MOUs) established?
- 1128     ▪ Where are gaps in relationships and how can you collaborate across organizations,  
1129     nonprofits, and agencies to build resilience in rural communities to be more effective? For  
1130     example, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), trusted businesses, and  
1131     community service organizations.

## 1132     **EXAMPLES OF PLANNING IN ACTION**

1133     Incorporating insights from rural communities into disaster planning efforts can lead to plans that  
1134     address the unique strengths and challenges of rural communities while significantly enhancing  
1135     disaster preparedness and resilience.

- 1136     ▪ **Strengthen Local Capacities:** Look for opportunities to invite and engage local groups, such as  
1137     community centers, agricultural cooperatives, and volunteer emergency services, in disaster  
1138     preparedness, response, and recovery activities.
  - 1139     ○ Provide opportunities for rural communities to lead disaster preparedness efforts, leveraging  
1140     local knowledge and networks to develop and implement plans that reflect the community's  
1141     specific needs and capacities.
- 1142     ▪ **Connect to Funding and Grants:** FEMA grants can be an important way rural communities can  
1143     build resilience. Identify ways to leverage grants to improve critical infrastructure, such as roads,  
1144     communication networks, and healthcare facilities, to enhance accessibility and response times.
- 1145     ▪ **Tailor Communication Strategies:** Develop communications plans that utilize local radio,  
1146     community bulletin boards, community or recreation centers, and other accessible methods to  
1147     ensure widespread information dissemination.

1148





## Other Resources – Rural Communities

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1150

[A Guide to Supporting Engagement and Resiliency in Rural Communities \(Sept 2021\)](#)

1151

[Achieving Equitable Recovery: A Post-Disaster Guide for Local Officials and Leaders \(fema.gov\)](#)

1152

[\(Nov 2023\)](#)

1153

[A rural capacity map - Headwaters Economics](#)

1154

[Fact Sheets | Rural Development \(usda.gov\)](#)

1155

[Rural Health Information Hub. Emergency Preparedness and Response Resources for Rural](#)

1156

[Communities \(2023\)](#)

1157

[National Rural Health Association. Policy Brief on Disaster Preparedness in Rural Areas \(2022\)](#)

1158

DRAFT

## 1159 Tribal Community Members and Tribal Nations

### 1160 COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

1161 Tribal Community Members,<sup>32</sup> especially tribal elders and tribal youth, and Tribal Nations are likely to  
1162 be disproportionately impacted by disasters due to a combination of factors, including  
1163 communication infrastructure issues (e.g., broadband), geographical isolation, underdeveloped  
1164 housing conditions, access to health care facilities, and other resource barriers. The following  
1165 describe some unique considerations for Tribal Community Members and Tribal Nations:

- 1166     ▪ More than 50% of Tribal Community Members live in rural and small-town areas that lack the  
1167       infrastructure of urban areas.
- 1168     ▪ Tribal Nations have not received annual consistent funding to build their emergency  
1169       management capacities and often lack dedicated tribal emergency management departments to  
1170       prepare Tribal Community Members.
- 1171     ▪ The lack of reliable broadband across Indian Country presents a barrier for those Tribal  
1172       Community Members who need to access the Internet, smartphones, applications, and internet-  
1173       based emergency alerts. These tools are important for preparing for a disaster and knowing how  
1174       to respond when an emergency is occurring.
- 1175     ▪ Tribal Community Members, especially those living in rural areas, frequently live on fixed  
1176       incomes, which may limit their access to resources. They may need additional assistance finding  
1177       free and affordable preparedness resources and accessing aid after a disaster.
- 1178     ▪ Tribal elders often experience medical, mobility, and disability challenges that make it more  
1179       difficult to evacuate or find a shelter that meets their health or accessibility needs.
- 1180     ▪ Some Tribal Community Members will not talk about disasters under the sincere religious belief  
1181       that it will bring the disaster. First identify if Tribal Community Members can talk about disasters  
1182       directly and if not think creatively about how to speak about the disaster in a round-about way.  
1183       For example, in planning, plan for your neighbor and not yourself.

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<sup>32</sup> Tribal Community Members can include anyone that the Tribal Nation considers part of their community. This includes enrolled tribal citizens, tribal descendants, tribal employees, spouses of tribal citizens, and any non-Natives in the community.



## Strategic Questions – Tribal Community Members and Tribal Nations

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Tribal Community Members may face additional or different challenges. Use the following strategic questions to guide your understanding and engagement with your community:

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- Have you ever tried to work with a Tribal Nation that helps protect its community? If not, why not? Go to the Tribal Nation’s website and learn about the Nation before reaching out to staff.

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- Do Tribal Community Members face additional barriers, such as homelessness, lack of mobility, or limited resources, that affect their plans to prepare for, respond to and recover from a disaster?

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- Are there any features unique to your area, such as frequent disasters or being in a rural tribal area, that may have a significant impact on Tribal Community Members?

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- Has this community previously faced challenges in disaster preparedness and response? How was that experience?

1197

1198

- What information sources do Tribal Community Members trust? How do these sources’ channels and messaging reach them?

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- What tribal leaders, organizations, nonprofits, religious institutions, and agencies do Tribal Community Members currently have strong relationships with?

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### EXAMPLES OF PLANNING IN ACTION

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This section includes ways that you can incorporate the lessons learned about Tribal Community Members and Tribal Nations into your planning efforts to foster more equitable and inclusive engagement.

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- Foster relationships with Tribal Nations, community-based [organizations](#), religious institutions, and regional Tribal Emergency Management groups that work with Tribal Community Members to educate them about new emergency risks, help them to create personalized disaster plans, and connect them to medical and transportation resources during a disaster.

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- Trusted organizations can include Tribal Nations, [Inter-Tribal Emergency Management Coalition](#), [Tribal Emergency Management Association](#), [Association of Village Council Presidents](#) (Alaska), [National Indian Council on Aging](#), [Bureau of Indian Affairs health clinics](#), tribal fire departments, and tribal law enforcement offices.

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1214

- Support tribal elders’ participation in community planning and decision making by ensuring their input is heard.

1215

1216

- This may include emergency managers and planners going to assisted living facilities, tribal nursing homes, or tribal-based organizations that work with older adults to engage older

1217 adults in disaster preparedness discussions as well as providing virtual options (that include  
1218 connectivity support) or transportation support to community engagement events.

1219 ■ In conjunction with Tribal Nations, develop a communications plan to reach Tribal Community  
1220 Members that lack access to broadband connectivity, such as using emergency alert systems on  
1221 the radio and television stations or connecting them with Community Emergency Response  
1222 Teams (CERT) and neighborhood watches.

1223 ■ Ensure emergency and congregate shelters are accessible and support the needs of tribal elders  
1224 and tribal youth.

1225 ○ For example, bathrooms are accessible for wheelchairs, walkers, baby strollers, and other  
1226 mobility supports, and there are accommodations for service animals.

1227  Other Resources – Tribal Community Members and Tribal Nations

1228 [Tribal Nations and the United States](#)

1229 [FEMA Tribal Declaration Process Resources and Tribal Recovery Video Series](#)

1230 [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\): Preparedness Resources for Tribes](#)

1231 [Ready.gov \(FEMA\): Indian Country](#)

1232 [Public Health Emergency: American Indian & Alaskan Native Disaster Preparedness Resource](#)

1233 [Emergency Declarations and Tribes: Mechanisms Under Tribal and Federal Law](#)

## 1234 Appendix B: Considerations for Putting People First by 1235 Plan Type

1236 While the planning process described above forms the basis for most emergency management  
1237 plans, the following questions are meant to help emergency managers think about the diverse and  
1238 varied nature of the people in their jurisdiction within the context of specific plan types. The  
1239 questions below are not exhaustive but are examples of how emergency managers can start to  
1240 consider overcoming barriers to access and ensure equitable distribution of information, resources,  
1241 and services in various contexts.



### 1242 Questions to Consider When Developing Emergency Management Plans

#### 1243 Deliberate/Strategic Plans

##### 1244 Emergency Operations Plan

- 1245 ▪ How will the jurisdiction build trust with underserved communities to ensure help reaches  
1246 those who need it most?
- 1247 ▪ How will the jurisdiction ensure that the emergency operations plan continues to meet the  
1248 needs of all members of the community, even as the community changes?

##### 1249 Continuity Plan

- 1250 ▪ What data sources could you use to understand the varying needs of essential functions  
1251 throughout your community?
- 1252 ▪ How can you ensure that underserved communities including those communities with  
1253 limited transportation options are able to access critical government services during a  
1254 continuity event?

##### 1255 Hazard Mitigation Plan

- 1256 ▪ Has the hazard mitigation planning process included meaningful consultation with  
1257 representative stakeholders from across the community?
- 1258 ▪ Does the plan include an evaluation of historical sources of inequity, including housing  
1259 conditions or practices, underinvestment, and the siting of polluting or hazardous  
1260 materials, and how those inequities increase the vulnerability of the built environment and

- 1261 the people who live there?<sup>33,34</sup>
- 1262
- 1263 ■ Were mitigation priorities determined using community input and preferences?
  - 1264 ■ Have mitigation and equity considerations been incorporated into new and existing capital improvement and other community mitigation projects?

1265 Recovery Plan

- 1266 ■ Has the planning team considered how to balance a desire to quickly get back to “normal”
- 1267 with the opportunity to achieve a more equitable future through incorporating local voices,
- 1268 and especially those from underserved communities, in a deliberate recovery planning
- 1269 process?
- 1270 ■ Has the planning effort included an evaluation of how recovery efforts might address
- 1271 historical inequities that have increased the vulnerability of the built environment and the
- 1272 people who live there?

1273 **Functional Plans**

1274 Alert and Warning Plan

- 1275 ■ Has the planning team considered a range of alert and warning modes, media, and
- 1276 methods to reach as many people as possible?
- 1277 ■ Has the planning team considered how to reach people with limited English proficiency?
- 1278 Without broadband access or cellular service? With access and functional needs?
- 1279 ■ Has the planning team built relationships with trusted community leaders who can amplify
- 1280 alert and warning messages?

1281 Evacuation and/or Shelter-In-Place Plan

- 1282 ■ How does the plan ensure that individuals with limited access to transportation resources
- 1283 (including fuel) know what evacuation options are available to them and how to access
- 1284 them in an emergency?
- 1285 ■ Has the planning team considered the needs of individuals with access and functional
- 1286 needs to ensure that medical and other services provided in an emergency are accessible
- 1287 to all who may need them?
- 1288 ■ How does the plan ensure that the homes of residents who have evacuated from areas
- 1289 near hazardous materials sites or other potential hazards are safe to return to after an
- 1290 emergency?

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<sup>33</sup> FEMA, *Guide to Expanding Mitigation: Making the Connection to Equity*. Undated. Accessed June 21, 2023. [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_mitigation-guide\\_equity.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_mitigation-guide_equity.pdf).

<sup>34</sup> San Mateo County, *Recommendations for Addressing Equity in Hazard Mitigation Planning: Background Report for the San Mateo County Multijurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan 2021 Update*. 2021. Accessed June 21, 2023. <https://www.smcgov.org/media/23126/download?inline=>

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Incident Action Plan

- How is the diversity of the jurisdiction reflected in the Essential Elements of Information and used to inform situational awareness for the incident?
- How are the needs of underserved communities reflected in the incident objectives, strategies, and tactics?

Mass Care Plan

- How has the planning team worked with community organizations to understand the variety of housing and sheltering needs in an emergency and in temporary housing programs? Some examples include separated quarters for single individuals versus families, the need for personal assistance services, accommodation of service animals, and enhanced cots.
- Can food service providers ensure all dietary considerations, including halal and vegetarian, among others, are accommodated to the greatest extent possible?

**Cross-Sector Plans**

Resilience Plan

- Have all relevant stresses, especially those affecting underserved communities, such as historical inequities that have increased the vulnerability of the built environment and the people who live there, been included in evaluations?
- Has an appropriate range of resilience projects been considered as part of the planning process? Have these projects been evaluated for their potential effects on underserved communities?

Climate Adaptation Plan

- How are community composition addressed when determining who sits at the table when climate adaptation plans are being written?
- Are individuals from underserved communities invited to participate in the planning process?
- Have interactions between climate adaptation policies and other economic and social policies that may disproportionately impact underserved populations been considered?
- Do implementation strategies reduce climate impacts on underserved groups?

**Emergency Management, Resilience, Mitigation and Adaptation Projects**

- Have diverse perspectives been included in proposing and considering projects?
- Does the project make existing disparities better, worse, or stay the same?
- Does the project produce any intentional benefits or unintended consequences for underserved communities?

## 1325 Appendix C: Vulnerabilities and Assets in Communities

1326 Communities in jurisdictions across the nation possess both strengths and assets that can help  
 1327 them during a disaster while also containing vulnerabilities that may put these populations at greater  
 1328 risk of being impacted by an incident. Understanding the assets and vulnerabilities of populations  
 1329 within a community can help the planning team ensure that the needs of those populations are met  
 1330 while leveraging population assets to increase the effectiveness of response and recovery efforts. A  
 1331 **vulnerability** in this context is an attribute that may be associated with reduced health, financial, or  
 1332 other negative impacts from disasters. An **asset** in this context is an attribute that may be associated  
 1333 with improved health, financial, or other results of disasters. Depending on the situation, an attribute  
 1334 could be both a vulnerability and an asset. For example, older populations may have difficulties  
 1335 evacuating due to difficulties with health, mobility, or communications. However, older populations  
 1336 may be able to recover more quickly from a disaster due to higher financial resources, including  
 1337 homeownership and insurance.

1338 **Table 1: Vulnerabilities and Assets in Communities**<sup>35</sup>

Category	Possible Vulnerabilities and/or Assets
Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Age</li> <li>▪ Disability</li> <li>▪ Education</li> <li>▪ Employment</li> <li>▪ English as a second language</li> <li>▪ Immigration status</li> <li>▪ Incarcerated populations</li> <li>▪ Income/wealth</li> <li>▪ Literacy</li> <li>▪ Persons with criminal records</li> <li>▪ Race/color/ethnicity/indigeneity</li> <li>▪ Religion</li> <li>▪ Sex/gender/sexual orientation</li> </ul>

<sup>35</sup> National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, *In the Eye of the Storm: A People’s Guide to Transforming Crisis and Advancing Equity in the Disaster Continuum Action Toolkit*. 2018. Accessed June 21, 2023. <https://naacp.org/resources/eye-storm-peoples-guide-transforming-crisis-advancing-equity-disaster-continuum> [Some additions and clarifications were made.]



Category	Possible Vulnerabilities and/or Assets
Housing Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Availability and access to vouchers for flood insurance assistance</li> <li>▪ Domestic violence shelters</li> <li>▪ Homelessness</li> <li>▪ Homeowners</li> <li>▪ Homeowners with homeowner’s insurance</li> <li>▪ Homeowners with flood clause in homeowner’s insurance</li> <li>▪ Homes in floodplains</li> <li>▪ Homes with flood-proofing</li> <li>▪ Number, location, and populations of prisons</li> <li>▪ Quality of housing stock (e.g., mobile homes, housing age)</li> <li>▪ Renters</li> <li>▪ Renters with renters’ insurance</li> <li>▪ Shelters for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) youth and adults</li> </ul>
Food Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Farmers’ markets/community markets per capita</li> <li>▪ Households identify as food insecure</li> <li>▪ Households with an easily accessible grocery store</li> <li>▪ Use food assistance programs (e.g., Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children)</li> </ul>
Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evacuation routes</li> <li>▪ Homes with vehicles</li> <li>▪ Public transportation availability and access</li> </ul>
Health System and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Doctors per capita</li> <li>▪ Domestic violence hotline</li> <li>▪ Durable medical equipment and consumable medical supply availability</li> <li>▪ Household distance to nearest hospital</li> <li>▪ Individuals with health insurance coverage</li> <li>▪ Mental health services</li> <li>▪ Nurses per capita</li> <li>▪ Persons with pre-existing health conditions</li> <li>▪ Persons with substance abuse</li> <li>▪ Substance abuse services</li> </ul>

Category	Possible Vulnerabilities and/or Assets
Environmental Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adequate/effective sewage</li> <li>▪ Adequate/effective waste management systems</li> <li>▪ Air quality</li> <li>▪ Homes within a 10-mile radius of a chemical plant</li> <li>▪ Homes within a 10-mile radius of a nuclear reactor</li> <li>▪ Homes within a 10-mile radius of other hazardous facility, including brownfields/toxic sites</li> <li>▪ Proximity to areas prone to natural hazards</li> <li>▪ Proximity of schools to brownfields/toxic sites</li> <li>▪ Water quality</li> </ul>
Emergency Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Availability of hazardous material (hazmat) certification programs</li> <li>▪ Disaster plans in place (e.g., schools, businesses, churches) and quality of plans</li> <li>▪ Hazmat-certified individuals</li> <li>▪ Household distance to nearest emergency medical services, including ambulance</li> <li>▪ Households' distances to nearest fire station</li> <li>▪ Household knowledge level of disaster resources</li> <li>▪ Households with disaster kits</li> <li>▪ Pre-disaster mental health preparation for first responders</li> </ul>
Businesses/Jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Businesses with floodproofing</li> <li>▪ Businesses with insurance</li> <li>▪ Employment rate</li> <li>▪ Locally owned/community-based businesses</li> <li>▪ Non-White-owned businesses</li> <li>▪ Size of local businesses</li> <li>▪ Union jobs</li> <li>▪ Women-owned businesses</li> <li>▪ Wages</li> <li>▪ Businesses in Agriculture, Forestry, and other industries</li> </ul>
Public/Private Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Households with water shut offs in the last 12 months</li> <li>▪ Households reliant on well water</li> <li>▪ Households with electricity shut offs in the last twelve months</li> <li>▪ Telecommunications—availability and access (e.g., phone/texting, television/cable, radio, broadband)</li> </ul>

Category	Possible Vulnerabilities and/or Assets
Social Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Availability and accessibility of services for undocumented persons</li> <li>▪ Availability and accessibility of social services</li> </ul>
Governance Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extent to which decision-makers match the demographics of the community make-up (somewhat subjective but measures should be identified like race, class, income, disability, and gender minimally)</li> <li>▪ Inclusive governance with appropriate representation in stakeholders given meaningful authority</li> <li>▪ Labor policies (including local hire provisions)</li> <li>▪ Policy landscape (e.g., health codes, building codes, zoning codes, ordinances) along with enforcement of codes</li> <li>▪ Voting participation in the last presidential and local elections</li> </ul>
Community Knowledge/Attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Knowledge of and views on disaster services and protocols</li> <li>▪ Knowledge of financial literacy</li> <li>▪ Neighborhood cohesion-attitudes (e.g., transient, multigenerational)</li> </ul>
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local populations have meaningful ties to community land/water</li> <li>▪ Level of engagement in community-based associations and faith-based institutions</li> </ul>

1339

## 1340 Appendix D: Community Data Analysis

1341 This section provides guidance on how to analyze demographic and socio-economic characteristics  
1342 in the context of emergency management planning. It addresses examples of relevant data,  
1343 indicators, and methods of analysis (e.g., quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis, geospatial  
1344 analysis, data visualization).

1345 Data analysis is one critical element for understanding and incorporating the unique needs across a  
1346 jurisdiction's populations, to include underserved communities, into planning. It is helpful for rooting  
1347 a plan within the context of the community and the populations affected by the plan. Qualitative and  
1348 quantitative data analysis methods can be used together to provide an informed view of the  
1349 characteristics of any community.

1350 Planning for an equitable and inclusive community analysis process requires an intentional approach  
1351 towards data collection, analysis, and communication. Implementing a robust data-planning process,  
1352 where a project scope is clearly articulated, is important; all needed stakeholders are identified,  
1353 integrated, and listened to respectfully. Accounting for the characteristics and composition of the  
1354 population in the data collection, analysis, and visualization phases is crucial to identifying the  
1355 requirements of the community and treating topics of analysis in a dignified manner, considering  
1356 their historical context, and incorporating their lived experience.

1357 The following sections highlight information pertaining to community characteristics in data-  
1358 collection strategies, analytical phases, and visualization.



### 1359 Data Collection, Analysis, and Visualization

- 1360 ▪ Understand the background and potential limitations of selected data sources. Some data  
1361 sources may not be disaggregated and may mask important variations.
- 1362 ▪ Look for data sources that provide data at the smallest possible geographic level  
1363 (e.g., census tract, neighborhood). Larger geographic area data may mask important local  
1364 variations.
- 1365 ▪ Avoid “measurability bias,” which overvalues the importance of things that are easily  
1366 measured (e.g., hazard impacts to buildings over wellness).
- 1367 ▪ Be mindful of the story that the data visualization tells and how it could be interpreted  
1368 depending on an individual's perspective.

### 1369 Data Collection

1370 Planning relies on assumptions pertaining to baseline community conditions, which are often  
1371 constructed using federal survey data, local administrative data sources, and input from local  
1372 community-based organizations. Although this network of data sources is constantly expanding,

1373 recognizing that such sources may contain limitations, and that they may not sufficiently represent  
1374 all facets of a community, is important. This is especially true across administrative and survey data.

- 1375 ▪ **Administrative data**, or organization-specific data that are collected for operational purposes, is  
1376 crucial, as it may help uncover trends in program use across various groups over time. However,  
1377 such data are not randomly collected, and instead reflect only those individuals who opt in,  
1378 qualify for, or are placed in certain programs. As such, the resultant data only reflect a subset of  
1379 individuals at a certain point in time and may not fully reflect an entire population. Examples of  
1380 administrative data from a disaster recovery perspective may include Individual Assistance  
1381 applicant data or National Flood Insurance Program policy data. While these data are useful and  
1382 may guide future planning activities, without context they may inadvertently reinforce historical  
1383 patterns or overlook portions of the community. Adding more dimensions (e.g., racial, and ethnic  
1384 characteristics, age, educational attainment) to administrative data so the data may be analyzed  
1385 across various population groups is important for ensuring an equitable approach.<sup>36</sup>
  
- 1386 ▪ **Survey data** are supposed to provide population insights based on a representative sample;  
1387 however, sampling methods may be unsound, and missing values may persist throughout the  
1388 dataset. Surveys may also employ population-level data-collection techniques, including  
1389 techniques to estimate missing data to conduct a population-level survey. Common examples of  
1390 survey data outputs include racial/ethnic proportionality estimates and education attainment  
1391 estimates, among others. The most famous survey example in the United States is the Decennial  
1392 Census, which seeks to provide an accurate count of all individuals throughout the United States.  
1393 Emergency managers may choose to conduct surveys to collect data specific to programs,  
1394 policies, plans, or projects that they are considering implementing. Surveys can be an effective  
1395 tool to elicit feedback from community members, but unintentional bias in the survey process  
1396 must be considered. When designing surveys, emergency managers should consider the target  
1397 population, sample size, question design, and how the survey will be conducted and  
1398 disseminated.

## 1399 **Data Analysis**

1400 Emergency management planning relies upon the outputs from several different data analyses to  
1401 support and guide decision-making. These analyses range from simple summary statistics to more  
1402 complex modeling and predictive analysis. Regardless of the type, all analyses and their inputs and  
1403 outputs must consider the whole community in their design and execution. Emergency managers  
1404 should try to understand the limitations of the data and methodologies they use and how those  
1405 limitations can be overcome. The following section provides an overview of how to analyze data  
1406 through an equity lens, specifically through data disaggregation, qualitative data analysis, and  
1407 community interpretation.

1408 **QUANTITATIVE DATA**

1409 Quantitative data are data that are characterized by numeric values. Two types of quantitative data  
1410 exist: discrete and continuous. Discrete data may be neatly grouped and binned together and can  
1411 only take on certain values. For example, if field responders are asked to quantify local damages on  
1412 a scale of one to five, where one indicates less damage and five indicates more damage, then they  
1413 are providing a discrete value. Continuous data, on the other hand, are not fixed. If, for example, the  
1414 field responders were asked to provide the actual economic impact data, instead of responding to a  
1415 fixed scale, then they would be providing a continuous data point, as the data can take on any value.  
1416 Importantly, both continuous and discrete data may be used to generate descriptive statistics, such  
1417 as the mean, median, and mode damage values.

1418 Aggregated data provide high-level overviews of large groups over time and help demonstrate  
1419 general trends. However, such high-level information may conceal trends within subsets of the  
1420 population, which may lead to insufficient planning outcomes for underserved communities.  
1421 Accordingly, analysts must disaggregate or drill down on the data as much as possible while  
1422 simultaneously protecting individuals and their personally identifiable information.

1423 **QUALITATIVE DATA**

1424 Qualitative data are any type of data that are not numerical but are observed and recorded.  
1425 Qualitative data, collected through long-form surveys, focus groups, open houses, and other  
1426 community meetings, allow analysts to weave community perspectives into the analytical process  
1427 and reflect on historical actions/policies that a quantitative dataset may not represent. Quantitative  
1428 data processes can miss the experiences and stories that shape how individuals and communities  
1429 perceive and interact with programs and influence the resulting analysis. This challenge may be  
1430 partially mitigated through the integration of qualitative data. For example, a survey on personal  
1431 preparedness would give insight into true levels of community preparedness that might be  
1432 overlooked if only census data were relied on. It may also help to identify the root causes that lead to  
1433 certain population subgroups not using assistance programs, such as misconceptions about  
1434 repayment, service, and more. Identifying the need for qualitative data during the data planning and  
1435 collection process is important in order to effectively incorporate it into analyses. It should also be  
1436 considered in the context of disaggregation, as noted in the previous section.<sup>37</sup>

1437 Consider a community that has a high percentage of residents that are below the poverty line, as  
1438 evidenced by a quantitative number (i.e., the poverty rate). Looking qualitatively and sourcing data  
1439 through a wide variety of personal anecdotes and experiences, however, shows that the community  
1440 has broad, well-supported social service programs that bridge the gap for many community  
1441 members. While the quantitative view emphasizes the outcome (i.e., poverty rate), the qualitative

1442 data help signal that existing support services and mitigation strategies are employed to support  
1443 vulnerable community members.

1444 Qualitative data may be collected in several ways. During the actual data collection phase, one-on-  
1445 one interviews help provide data based on individual experiences. Similarly, open-response text  
1446 boxes in surveys augment the quantitative data collection that is already planned. When looking to  
1447 validate findings, however, one may need to take different approaches. Local archives, for example,  
1448 serve as a wealth of information for historical qualitative data. Alternatively, validating qualitative  
1449 data through community feedback sessions may be beneficial.

## 1450 **GEOSPATIAL ANALYSIS**

1451 A Geographic Information System (GIS) allows emergency managers to understand the make-up of  
1452 their community by exploring and visualizing data layers within a map interface. A GIS can be used to  
1453 help identify patterns and problems, monitor change, or manage and respond to events. As a result,  
1454 it can be a valuable tool in understanding the diverse considerations of a community or jurisdiction  
1455 through mapping, where data related to a specific issue (e.g., access to public transportation) are  
1456 shown in conjunction with social, economic, or demographic data to illustrate patterns, trends, or  
1457 problems. When looking at the different dimensions of putting people first, such as risk and  
1458 vulnerability, access to services and benefits, and participation in community decision-making,  
1459 emergency managers need to understand the makeup of their community. Visualizing community  
1460 makeup on a map can help an emergency manager understand at a glance where additional  
1461 resources should be deployed.

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### Resilience Analysis and Planning Tool

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The [Resilience Analysis and Planning Tool](#) (RAPT) is a FEMA-sponsored, publicly available GIS tool to help emergency managers and community partners at all GIS skill levels to visualize and assess potential challenges to community resilience. The tool allows emergency managers and other community leaders to examine the interplay of census data, infrastructure locations, and hazards, including real-time weather forecasts, historical disasters, and estimated annualized frequency of hazard risk. RAPT can assist in developing a community resilience profile that visualizes risks and challenges to resilience and help provide information needed to tailor outreach strategies for a community. It can also identify collaborative planning team members who represent diverse community interests.

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RAPT contains map layers showing the distribution of some underserved groups at both the county level and at the more discrete census tract level. Many of the data points suggested in Appendix D can be found in RAPT. RAPT can provide emergency managers with a way to examine their jurisdictions in search of population groups that may need assistance accessing services and benefits.

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### EJScreen: A Tool to Understand Environmental Justice

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[EJScreen](#) is an environmental justice mapping and screening tool that provides The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with a nationally consistent dataset and approach for combining environmental and demographic indicators. EJScreen users choose a geographic area; the tool then provides demographic and environmental information for that area. All the EJScreen indicators are publicly available data. EJScreen simply provides a way to display this information and includes a method for combining environmental and demographic indicators into Environmental Justice (EJ) indexes. EJScreen includes twelve environmental indicators, seven demographic indicators and 12 EJ indexes. Each EJ index combines demographic indicators with a single environmental indicator.

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## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN DATA ANALYSIS

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To get the most thorough understanding of a community, emergency managers should engage community members to validate the data analysis and the conclusions made from it. Engaging the community helps develop trust and a mutual understanding of needs and outcomes between emergency managers and the community. Working with community members to validate information collected about them also builds trust.



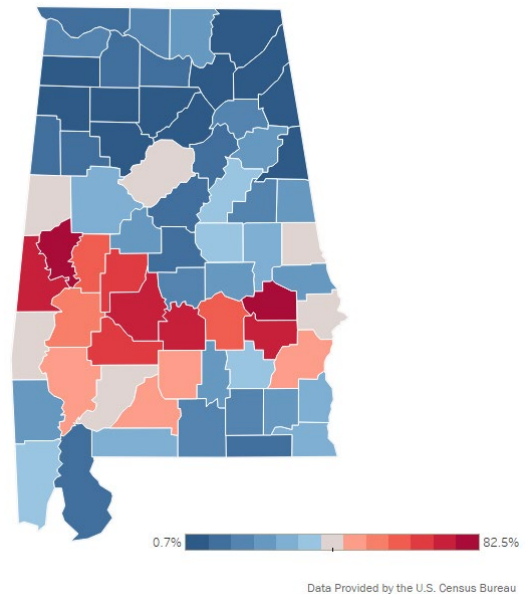
## 1493 Data Visualization

1494 One of the most important elements of any data analysis is data visualization. Data visualization  
1495 helps to translate raw, tabular data into something that is intelligible for a broader audience through  
1496 a visual medium. It is incredibly important to be intentional about data visualization and how it is  
1497 employed, specifically when considering color, orders, labels, and iconography/images. A good  
1498 guiding principle is, “If I was part of a group described by the data point, would I feel offended?”<sup>38</sup>  
1499 The following section describes different inclusive considerations relative to data visualization.

## 1500 COLOR

1501 Color is a powerful visual cue that can be used to trigger emotions, both positive and negative, in an  
1502 audience. Due to its powerful nature, being careful when selecting a color palette is crucial. Some  
1503 key considerations include the following:

- 1504 ▪ **Colors associated with stereotypes.** A common  
1505 example is blue and pink, which since the 1950s,  
1506 have been come to represent men and women,  
1507 respectively. Using this type of gendered palette  
1508 may reinforce stereotypes and may also box out  
1509 individuals.<sup>39</sup>
  
- 1510 ▪ **Unintended messages.** For example, red is often  
1511 used to denote danger, anger, or aggression, while  
1512 green denotes health and vibrance. While color can  
1513 be used to bring individual groups forward, it can  
1514 also be used to erase, including those represented  
1515 in visuals as well as those in the audience. This  
1516 problem is clear when relying upon a diverging  
1517 color palette, where light grays represent the  
1518 median values. The map shown in **Figure 5.**  
1519 illustrates the percent of population that is Non-  
1520 Hispanic Black in the State of Alabama. Dark red  
1521 indicates a greater percent of the population is  
1522 Non-Hispanic Black. As shown in **Figure 5.,** gray colors can often fade when surrounded by more  
1523 saturated hues. Accordingly, analysts must select color palettes that include all individuals and



**Figure 5: Percent population in Alabama that is Non-Hispanic Black.**

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<sup>38</sup> Schwabish, J., and A. Feng, *Do No Harm Guide: Applying Equity Awareness in Data Visualization*. June 9, 2021. Accessed June 21, 2023. <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/104296/do-no-harm-guide.pdf>.

1524 groups in a visualization, rather than exclude or deemphasize.<sup>40</sup> Also, the blue and red in **Figure**  
1525 **5.** also may be confused with notation of political parties.

1526 ■ **Accessibility.** It is important that visuals meet accessibility guidelines (e.g., [Section 508 of the](#)  
1527 [Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#) and [ADA standards](#).) for visually impaired persons, for instance, by  
1528 having descriptive alternate text or using colorblind-friendly color palettes.<sup>41</sup> Colors like red and  
1529 green, for example, can be difficult for people with colorblindness to differentiate. Many  
1530 resources are available to assist analysts in choosing accessible color palettes.

### 1531 **ORDERING OF INFORMATION**

1532 In addition to color, order of information plays a key role in data visualization and interpretation.  
1533 When used intentionally, order can help better tell the story of a visualization. However, when used  
1534 improperly or without intention, it may obscure the perception of different elements and create a  
1535 sense of conflict between groups.

1536 Order is commonly associated with hierarchy in data collection, analysis, and design. Ordering  
1537 groups using a standardized, judgment-free methodology is important. One common approach is  
1538 alphabetical ordering, where keys are sorted on an ascending or descending alphabetical basis. This  
1539 helps reduce the sense of prioritization while maintaining a sense of order and organization. Order  
1540 can also be created through different fields (e.g., ascending or descending by population size) or  
1541 impact/magnitude values. These approaches help to clarify the ordering of information without  
1542 applying any moral weight to the information.<sup>42</sup>

### 1543 **LANGUAGE**

1544 One of the most important elements of data visualization is language. Language manifests in data  
1545 labels, titles, and annotations. It allows the audience to better understand the visualization, and  
1546 provides the narrative required to contextualize data.

1547 One way to consider specific and unique needs of various communities with respect to language is to  
1548 consult with members of the groups being described in their preferred language. Another way to  
1549 employ equitable language is by using person-first language for people with disabilities. Person-first  
1550 language centers on the individual or group that is being discussed, rather than their diagnosis, to

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<sup>42</sup> Schwabish, J., and A. Feng, *Do No Harm Guide: Applying Equity Awareness in Data Visualization*. June 9, 2021. Accessed June 21, 2023. <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/104296/do-no-harm-guide.pdf>.

1551 emphasize their whole personhood. For example, “disabled people” shifts to “people with  
1552 disabilities,” which deemphasizes the label.<sup>43</sup>

1553 In addition to person-first language, analysts should integrate alternate text descriptions into data  
1554 visualizations. Alternate text provides context to people who are visually impaired and rely on screen  
1555 readers to understand visualizations.<sup>44</sup> Importantly, alternative text needs to effectively  
1556 communicate the primary message of the original image.

## 1557 **IMAGES AND ICONS**

1558 Images and icons can help clarify the intent of a visualization and can even be used as the primary  
1559 focus of a visualization. However, they can inadvertently perpetuate stereotypes, mischaracterize  
1560 groups, and flatten individuals. Accordingly, taking care when selecting which images and icons to  
1561 use to ensure they do not perpetuate bias or stereotypes is important.

1562 Images and icons should empower and uplift, rather than devalue and degrade. Analysts should be  
1563 careful not to use images that convey individuals as caricatures of their identity or that portray  
1564 individuals as helpless. Although caricatures may appear as innocuous heuristics for groups, they  
1565 are often negative.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, individuals should not be shown in extreme distress or in ways that  
1566 perpetuate stereotypes.

1567 Icons can easily reflect biases that we carry every day. Using icons that reflect total populations  
1568 and/or key functions of a group, rather than individuals, is important. For example, using icons that  
1569 focus on function or trigger associations (e.g., for a nurse, using a medical cross rather than a female  
1570 with a nursing cap) may help combat bias. Alternatively, using an image that contains a diverse  
1571 group of individuals, rather than a single person, can help ensure the profession is not reduced to a  
1572 single race or gender.

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<sup>43</sup> Crocker, A.F. and S.N. Smith, “Person-first language: are we practicing what we preach?” *Journal of Multidisciplinary Healthcare*. 125-129. February 8, 2019. Accessed June 21, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.2147/JMDH.S140067>.

<sup>44</sup> Zewe, A., “Making data visualizations more accessible.” *MIT News*. October 12, 2021. Accessed June 21, 2023. <https://news.mit.edu/2021/data-visualizations-accessible-blind-1012>.

## 1574 Appendix E. Definitions, Acronyms, and Abbreviations

### 1575 Definitions

1576 **Community:** the people with common interests living in a particular area; the area itself; a group of  
1577 people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society; a body of  
1578 persons or nations having a common history or common social, economic, and political interests; a  
1579 group linked by a common policy.<sup>46</sup>

1580 **Demographics:** the particular characteristics of a population. Examples of demographic  
1581 characteristics include age, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, income, education, home ownership,  
1582 sexual orientation, marital status, family size, health, and disability status, and psychiatric  
1583 diagnosis.<sup>47</sup>

1584 **Equity:** consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including  
1585 individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as  
1586 Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders  
1587 and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and  
1588 queer persons (LGBTQ); persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons  
1589 otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.<sup>48</sup>

1590 **Intersectionality:** the combined effects of one's multiple identities, which includes identities such as  
1591 race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and employee status.<sup>49</sup>

1592 **Redlining:** a discriminatory practice of denying loans or services within a specific geographic area  
1593 due to the race or ethnicity of its residents. On maps, these high-risk areas were outlined in red. The  
1594 practice was deemed illegal with passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Merriam Webster Dictionary, "Community." Undated. Accessed June 21, 2023. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/community>.

<sup>47</sup> Salkind, N.J., *Encyclopedia of research design (Vols. 1-0)* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2010). Accessed June 21, 2023. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412961288>.

<sup>48</sup> The White House, *Executive Order 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*. January 20, 2021. Accessed January 6, 2022. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/>.

<sup>49</sup> Flowers, H., "Intersectionality Part One: Intersectionality Defined." *National Institutes of Health*. July 18, 2019. Accessed June 21, 2023. <https://www.edi.nih.gov/blog/communities/intersectionality-part-one-intersectionality-defined>.

<sup>50</sup> Rewers, R., "Understanding Redlining and its Impacts." American Planning Association. March 8, 2022. Accessed June 21, 2023. <https://www.planning.org/blog/9231005/understanding-redlining-and-its-impacts/>.

1595 **Risk:** The potential for an unwanted outcome as determined by its likelihood and the  
1596 consequences.<sup>51</sup>

1597 **Underserved communities:** populations who share a particular characteristic (e.g., race and ethnicity,  
1598 religion, gender, sexual orientation), as well as geographic areas that “have been systematically  
1599 denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social and civic life.”<sup>52</sup>

1600 **Vulnerability:** Physical feature or operational attribute that renders an entity open to exploitation or  
1601 susceptible to a given hazard.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Department of Homeland Security. *DHS Lexicon Terms and Definitions, 2017 Edition, Revision 2*.  
[https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/18\\_0116\\_MGMT\\_DHS-Lexicon.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/18_0116_MGMT_DHS-Lexicon.pdf) 2017

<sup>52</sup> The White House, *Executive Order 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*. 2021. Accessed January 6, 2022. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/>.

<sup>53</sup> Department of Homeland Security, 2017. *DHS Lexicon Terms and Definitions, 2017 Edition, Revision 2*.  
[https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/18\\_0116\\_MGMT\\_DHS-Lexicon.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/18_0116_MGMT_DHS-Lexicon.pdf)

1604 **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

1605	CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1606	EJ	Environmental Justice
1607	EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1608	FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
1609	GIS	Geographic Information System
1610	Hazmat	hazardous material
1611	IAP2	International Association for Public Participation
1612	MOAs	Memorandums of Agreement
1613	MOUs	Memorandums of Understanding
1614	P3	private-public partnership
1615	RAPT	Resilience Analysis and Planning Tool
1616	SVI	Social Vulnerability Index

