



MEDIA RELEASE

Emergency Management Agency

Ohio Emergency Management Agency • Nancy J. Dragani, Executive Director
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Contact: Tamara McBride, Ohio EMA, (614) 799-3695

Ohio Emergency Management Hosts Functional Needs Summit

COLUMBUS, OH – The Ohio Emergency Management Agency hosted the State of Ohio Functional Needs Summit in Worthington, today. At the summit, participants examined the gaps that may exist in the disaster-based functional needs service network and determined ways to improve communication between responders, service providers, and local and state agencies.

The National Response Framework uses the definition of “functional needs” instead of “special needs” because *functional* reflects the capabilities of the individual; not the condition, label or medical diagnosis. Five functional needs categories were addressed: functional independence, communication, supervision/safety, medical care, and transportation support.

“When addressing functional needs, it is what FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate says: It’s Whole Community planning,” said Nancy Dragani, executive director of Ohio EMA. “Functional needs planning doesn’t involve a separate plan for children; a separate plan for older people; a separate plan for individuals with physical disabilities; a separate plan for non-English speaking people. No. It’s whole community planning where we ensure that everyone has access to the same shelters, disaster recovery centers; understands the same emergency messages and receives the same evacuation and recovery information.”

Guest speakers included:

- John Born, Director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety
- Nancy Dragani, Executive Director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency
- Jessica Mitchell, FEMA Region V Disability Integration
- Brad Schwartz, Ohio EMA
- John L. Moore, Director, Deaf Services Center, Inc.
- Ray Herbst, Director, Ashland County/City Health Department, Div. of Public Health Emergency Preparedness
- Vince Gildone, Northwest Ambulance District, Ashtabula County
- Gregory Meyer, Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities
- Jillian Ober, The Ohio State University Nisonger Center
- Karen Seidman Cuyahoga County Board of Health
- Tara Vargovich, Geauga County Department of Emergency Management
- Marlene Martin, Summit County Medical Reserve Corps
- Kathy Silvestri, Hospital Council of Northwest Ohio

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