

**Interagency Coordinating Council on Emergency Preparedness and  
Individuals With Disabilities**

**Third Quarterly Meeting  
Thursday, March 24, 2005**

**Meeting Participants**

Participants included representatives from the following organizations:

Peg Bleckman, Access Board  
Randall Pope, American Association for the Deaf-Blind  
Elizabeth Spiers, (American Association for the Deaf-Blind  
Roberta Carlin, American Association on Health and Disability  
Kelly Potter, American Occupational Therapy Association  
Bruce McFarlane, Department of Agriculture  
John Surina, Department of Agriculture  
Jeff Nulf, Department of Commerce  
Jorge Ponce, Department of Commerce  
Dennis Legel, Department of Defense  
Ruth Brannon, Dept. of Education  
Bonnie Gracer, Department of Education  
John Hager, Department of Education  
Andrew Patterson, Department of Energy  
Dave Pegram, Department of Energy  
Carol Baker, Department of Health and Human Services  
Leah Lavine, Department of Health and Human Services  
Tom Valluzi, Department of Health and Human Services  
Marc Wolfson, Department of Health and Human Services  
Deana Amendolia, Department of Homeland Security  
Ed Buikema, Department of Homeland Security- FEMA  
Tom Choman, Department of Homeland Security  
Jim Dart, Department of Homeland Security- FEMA  
Debbie Fulmer, Department of Homeland Security  
Tracey Gilliland, Department of Homeland Security  
Claudia Gordon, Department of Homeland Security  
Kristin Hogan, Department of Homeland Security  
Michael Jackson, Department of Homeland Security  
Ryan Killeen, Department of Homeland Security  
Jill Rhodes, Department of Homeland Security  
Valerie Smith, Department of Homeland Security  
Daniel Sutherland, Department of Homeland Security)  
Christine Louton, Department of the Interior  
Aquanetta Newson, Department of the Interior  
Ollie Cantos, Department of Justice  
Bradley J. Schlozman, Department of Justice  
Beth Bienvenu, Department of Labor

Kim Cook, Department of Labor  
Dr. Roy Grizzard, Department of Labor  
Nadia Ibrahim, Department of Labor  
Brian Parsons, Department of Labor  
Brenda Harris, Department of State  
Maggie Morse, Department of State  
John Benison, Department of Transportation  
Kathleen Brockman, Department of Transportation  
Tracy Colligan, Department of Transportation  
Jennifer Critchlow, Department of Transportation  
Tony Tisdale, Department of Transportation  
Michael Trujillo, Department of Transportation  
James Carr, Environmental Protection Agency  
Christopher Kuczynski, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
Monica Desai, Federal Communications Commission  
Jay Keithley, Federal Communications Commission  
Cheryl King, Federal Communications Commission  
Wendell Watkins, General Services Administration  
Anne Rader, National Council on Disability  
Jeff Rosen, National Council on Disability  
James McCarthy, National Federation of the Blind  
Hilary C. Styron, National Organization on Disability  
Cheryl Heppner, Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons  
John Martin, Office of Personnel Management  
Mark Robbins, Office of Personnel Management  
Dr. George Bouthilet, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities  
Kathy Hargett, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities  
Cynthia Jones, Social Security Administration  
Marcy Jacobs, SRA International, Inc.  
Stacy Peerbolte, United States Senate- Sergeant at Arms Office

## **Welcome and Introduction by Dan Sutherland, Department of Homeland Security Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties**

Mr. Sutherland welcomed participants to the meeting and thanked Cheryl King, Federal Communications Commission, for hosting the meeting. Mr. Sutherland reminded the group how important this work is in two ways: 1) it matters to people because it determines whether or not they make it through emergencies and 2) people in this country have not focused on these issues in the way they should. It is our responsibility to spread the word about these issues and get some tangible things done.

### **Presentation on Tulsa Citizen Corps and Tulsa Partners and Tulsa Project Impact**

Mr. Sutherland introduced Tim Lovell, Executive Director of Tulsa Partners, Inc. and Tulsa Citizen Corps who participated in the meeting via video conference. Mr. Lovell also oversees the Tulsa Mayor's Citizen Corps and is the Public Private Program Manager for the City of Tulsa. Mr. Lovell introduced Diana Higgins, Public Relations Manager at TSHA, a United Way agency that works with people who are deaf or hard of hearing. She also participated in this meeting via video conference. Ms. Higgins indicated that TSHA, located in Northeastern Oklahoma, serves about 400,000 people covering more than 200 square miles. Due to the oil and gas industry, they have had resources that other towns of similar size may not have.

Mr. Lovell and Ms. Higgins co-presented a PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Lovell indicated that during the 1970's and 1980's, they had the most federally declared disaster declarations in the nation, primarily due to flooding. They also have tornadoes and the usual risks of manmade hazards. In 1998, the Tulsa Project Impact Program was created as an initiative by FEMA under the Clinton Administration, focusing on public/private partnerships to develop education and mitigation strategies to reduce risk. One major focus was tornado safe rooms.

Mr. Lovell introduced the slide with an image of a gentleman in a wheelchair in front of a safe room to promote the idea of using tornado safe rooms for people who have disabilities. The next slide contained two images, one of a couple with one person in a wheelchair and the other a frail woman. They were both sold a below ground shelter with a steep incline, impossible for the person in the wheelchair to navigate. Through the partnership, the below ground rooms were removed and a new safe room was installed in the garage.

Ms. Higgins explained that TSHA is an agency working with individuals who are deaf. They were formerly Tulsa Speech Association, which started in 1954 when parents of deaf children got together to provide services for their kids. They have been a United Way supported agency for about 35 years and one of the first Project Impact partners. TSHA was the first site to host a training called, "Open for Business," which is offered by the Mayor Citizen Corps at no cost to small businesses to help them prepare for a disaster.

They worked with Citizen Corps on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Radio Distribution Program. Tulsa Project Impact received grant money to provide

NOAA weather radios to the community and consulted with TSHA about best distribution methods to get the radios into the hands of those who are deaf. The radios include strobe lights and vibrators that go under the pillow to awaken someone who can not hear an alarm. They were placed in deaf education classrooms in the Tulsa area so that students who are deaf would learn what a NOAA radio is and how to get into a safe place as quickly as hearing students could. TSHA bridged connections with Citizen Corps and deaf education classrooms and also worked with the State of Oklahoma equipment distribution contact person who is deaf. This state contact person came to classrooms to do presentations of how the radios work. It was an excellent example of cooperative interagency efforts.

Mr. Lovell explained that after September 11<sup>th</sup>, Project Impact moved over to Citizen Corps. They continue to do work in public/private partnerships and mitigation, but incorporated volunteer service and recruitment to assist in their homeland security efforts and multi-hazard mitigation. Some of their programs include:

- Language and Culture Bank. The Bank provides language and translator services to first responders and speakers on diversity issues to diffuse any backlash from targeted ethnic/cultural groups. The head of the Language and Culture Bank prepared a list of interpreters to respond to an emergency situation. TSHA contacted their interpreters to coordinate and provide a list of interpreters who would volunteer their time during an emergency.
- Tulsa Human Response Coalition. The Coalition existed prior to Citizen Corps and then was incorporated into one of the Corps seven programs. It is a coalition of more than 50 faith-based and community-based organizations. This coalition also includes TSHA. They have assisted Citizen Corps in gathering a skilled bank of volunteers including mental health workers and other people with specialized skills. In May of 2003 they provided mental health workers to assist people who were hit by tornadoes. Many of those people also experienced the five tornadoes in 1999. Last year Tulsa experienced a major power outage and they assisted people within the disability community.

Ms. Higgins explained that TSHA attended their second table top exercise as a member of the Human Response Mission. This was a disaster drill, where realistic updates were provided to each group through phone calls and e-mail. It allowed all participants to get a realistic feel for what might happen and what to do in the case of an actual emergency.

- The Safe and Secure Program provides assessment services, education and training, and volunteer recruitment in neighborhoods, businesses, and nonprofit agencies. They work at more than 75 sites in their community including Tulsa Transit Lift, which works with the disability community as well as TSHA. Ms. Higgins stated that they welcomed the opportunity to participate in training like this for the deaf community that had no cost other than the provision of interpreters and space. They provided interpreters one day a month over an eight-month period to educate the deaf community on things like first aid and CPR, bioterrorism, and home preparedness awareness. With the Mayor Citizen Corps, they went out to several established deaf groups ahead of time and got information and the message out about the Safe and Security Program. Sue Mencer, then Executive Director of DHS Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness, came to

visit TSHA, an event that was highlighted at the 2003 National Preparedness Symposium. Weather radios with strobes lights and vibrating attachments that go under the pillow are offered on a continual basis through the gift shop.

- The Medical Reserve Corps is a program working in partnership with several entities statewide, explained Mr. Lovell. It began in Tulsa, and with a grant received through Tulsa Partners, Inc., a nonprofit organization, they set up chapters in Oklahoma City, Lawton, and worked with the Oklahoma Nurses Association. Through Medical Reserve Corps, volunteers are recruited who will respond in the event of a medical emergency.
- The Alert Neighbors Neighborhood Watch program has existed since 1970's and is run by the non-profit organization, The Crime Commission. They are very active partners who assisted Citizen Corps through Safe and Secure. They have been trying to develop a strategy with Citizen Corps using Safe and Secure Community Emergency Response and Alert Neighbors, a Neighborhood Watch Organization, as a continuum of training neighborhoods.
- Volunteers in Police Services are part of the existing Citizen Corps since the early 1980's. Tulsa's Police Department has a number of programs including the Grey Squad, which is a group of select volunteers that work on cold cases. They have successfully satisfied cases for the Police. They also have a Spanish Ride-Along Program. Ms. Higgins explained that TSHA had a preexisting relationship with the Tulsa Police Department where someone from TSHA participates in every rookie class to make them more aware of how to deal with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Community Emergency Response Teams, or CERT, has worked with many agencies throughout Tulsa County. They received a large grant from the U.S. Department of Education to take the CERT program into more than 80 schools in the Tulsa School District. They are working to get CERT into neighborhoods. This is the core of our volunteer support. The most passionate volunteers are the ones who come out of the 20-hour CERT training. There is a role for everyone in the program, no matter their physical capacity.
- Tulsa Project, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit agency that supports the work of Citizen Corps, was formed to develop special partnership initiatives, which has proven to be the best way to approach citizen involvement for emergency preparedness. People and organizations who will not give money to public or government entities will give to a 501(c)(3) organization to receive the tax benefit. Tulsa Project worked with the Quick Trip Corporation, a local convenience store similar to 7-11, to place emergency preparedness guides in each of the stores. Thanks to that partnership, McDonald's marketing firm heard about the campaign and asked how they could partner with Tulsa Project. That led to the McReady Program, the local initiative then expanded statewide. It is now going into its third year, providing information at all 140 McDonald's stores statewide during the month of April. It includes partnerships with the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management, and the Oklahoma Flood Management Association. Last September that partnership lead to a partnership with

Subway Restaurants where they placed posters in 100 Subway restaurants in Northeastern Oklahoma. Then the SBC Foundation provided a grant to update the Tulsa Project, Inc. website and created a database for volunteers.

Ms. Higgins informed the Committee that Claudia Gordon will speak in Tulsa this September to recognize both Disaster Preparedness Month and National Deaf Awareness Week. She will speak to both the preparedness community and the local deaf community

Mr. Lovell concluded his presentation with a slide of a poster with drawings of flowers. At the center of each flower is a photograph of children. The poster says, "Thank you for keeping us safe."

The audience members interposed the following questions or comments:

- *Michael Trujillo asked if Tulsa was doing anything in the way of emergency transportation.* Mr. Lovell indicated that there is a Tulsa Lift Program offered through the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) – the local bus system. Citizen Corps is working with MTA to provide the Safe and Secure Program to the Tulsa Transit Lift Program to equip their customers with preparedness knowledge.
- *Mr. Sutherland asked if McDonalds, Subway, and other places provided materials specific to people with disabilities and their families or just general information on how to prepare for emergencies? If specific material is not offered, it is an indicator that the work the ICC is doing to create a clearinghouse will pay off in a big way because this audience will be willing to use the materials. He asked about what materials they already have.* Mr. Lovell answered that the materials are not geared toward the disability community, but rather to the general public in terms of how to create a kit and develop a plan. In Tulsa, maps depicting local flood plain areas in relation to McDonalds locations are offered. Family preparedness guides instruct each person to look at their family's needs and develop plans contingent on special needs they may have. However, other materials specific to disability issues are not provided at the McReady sites.

### **Department of Homeland Security Activity Update**

Secretary Ridge wrote a letter to all 50 of the state Governors and U.S. territories about the issue of emergency preparedness and people with disabilities. In addition, he personally went to the Republican Governor's Association and the Democratic Governor's Association to discuss the issue. In his letter he asked them to take steps to ensure their planning was as comprehensive as possible with regards to the issues facing individual with disabilities and incorporate people with disabilities into the emergency preparedness effort. He encouraged them to conduct emergency preparedness exercises that included people with disabilities in the actual exercise event. He asked that emergency management personnel be properly trained on these issues and make sure materials they use are accessible to people with disabilities. He reminded them that a portion of the money coming from state grants and money going to the cities, such as urban area security initiative grants, could be spent in this area. He encouraged them to look for projects in this subject matter area as they plan their

spending. He finally asked the governors to share with him lessons they had learned and positive steps they were taking incorporating people with disabilities into their emergency planning. So far, Mr. Sutherland has received letters from six governors.

### **Federal Communications Commission Ruling**

Mr. Sutherland introduced Jay Keithley from the FCC. Mr. Sutherland introduced Jay Keithley from the FCC. Mr. Keithley is the Acting Chief of the FCC Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau since Dane Snowden moved on to the private sector. Mr. Keithley has been CGB's Deputy Chief for Policy and has had responsibility for the FCC's Disability Rights Office since President Bush chartered the ICC. He has been working with Cheryl King to support the Commission's efforts in the ICC and on the Emergency Communications Subcommittee. He spends a great deal of time working with colleagues in the Disabilities Rights Office and people in the hearing and disabled community. Mr. Keithley indicated his concern about people with hearing disabilities in emergency situations.

Section 79.2 requires video programming distributors, TV broadcasters, cable TV companies, and satellite television providers to make emergency information accessible to individuals with hearing and vision disabilities. When emergency information is provided to seeing and hearing viewers, the same information must be made accessible to persons with vision and hearing disabilities. For those with hearing disabilities, oral information must be provided visually through closed captioning, scrolls, and the like. For those who are blind or with low vision, emergency information that interrupts regularly scheduled programming must be orally described, and when emergency information provides visuals, the visual information must be accompanied by the tone and instructions where to tune to for more information.

Emergency information provides information about life safety and may include affected areas, evacuation routes, evacuation orders, and shelter locations. Examples in the commission rules include weather-related emergencies, environmental emergencies, and power-related emergencies.

The Commission issues annual public notices reminding video programming distributors of their obligations under 79.2. A Public Notice was released last week and a copy is available in the binder. The Public Notice assures accessibility to emergency information for persons with hearing disabilities. Fines of \$20,000 to \$25,000 were proposed in notices of liability and forfeitures against three local California stations. These enforcement actions were issued as a result of video programming covering wild fires throughout Southern California. The local TV stations provided 24-hour coverage, but individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing or who have low vision during critical hours did not know fires were approaching their homes. Due to high winds, these fires spread rapidly and caused the evacuation of many of San Diego's residents. There was loss of life, injuries, and extensive damage to natural resources. Warnings about road closures and alerts to people to stay put early in the morning were given verbally, but were not received by anyone who could not hear the television.

These enforcement actions are the first in the Commission's history regarding access and reaffirmed the Commission's sincere commitment to address the need for critical emergency

information by people with hearing and vision disabilities. Television stations across America are on notice that the Commission will not stand by while persons with disabilities are not provided accessible broadcast emergency information. Material on this topic is available on the website. (Go to the homepage; click on the Daily Digest, then go to the February 23<sup>rd</sup>; scroll down.) The public notice located in the meeting binder describes the action.

Mr. Sutherland commented that this policy and the next presentation are not just good policies, but the law. There are legal obligations in the Communications Act in Title 2, Title 3 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, which can be applied to state and local governments in an innovative way. Mr. Sutherland then introduced Elaine Gardner from the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights & Urban Affairs.

### **Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights & Urban Affairs**

Elaine Gardner reported that on September 3, 2002, almost exactly one year from 9/11, her client, Katie Savage, who uses a wheelchair, was shopping in Marshalls in City Mall in Silver Spring. An emergency evacuation alarm was sounded, customers were rushed from the store, and the store was shuttered. Katie was left in her wheelchair outside the store while customers and staff evacuated. Customers were running out because they thought there was a bomb. Katie remained in the mall for over an hour without any official communication from the outside. Though it turned out to be a false alarm, she did not know that. She was not told where to go and elevators were shut off in the mall. This is a multistory, urban mall with no signage. There were no areas of rescue assistance. She vowed to take that traumatic experience and turn it into an opportunity for her to improve accessibility of emergency evacuation to people with disabilities.

The Washington Lawyers' Committee filed a lawsuit on Katie's behalf against Marshalls and against the mall. At the end of the year the Committee received an important opinion from a Maryland Court ruling Title III of the ADA does cover emergency evacuation. We always think of Title III of the ADA as getting people into stores, but it's equally or more important to get them out of the stores in case of an emergency. The judge said, unequivocally, that Title III of the ADA covers the emergency evacuation policies of retail and public accommodation. Also important is the decision that a tenant of a mall does not get rid of its obligation just by getting the person with the disability out of its store. It has an obligation to ensure that they are evacuating that person to a safe place and that the person knows where to go to achieve rescue assistance if the mall is not accessible.

At work a person with a disability has support - people who know their coworker's needs. At home with the family, it is the same thing. In public entities public officers may be concerned about your safety. But in a place of public accommodation, such as a retail store, you might be alone. No one knows you are there or your needs. It's very important that the policies ensure safe evacuation of persons with disabilities and signage is clear about safe evacuation. Federal employees have called asking how it applies to them.

Questions and comments

- *Has similar litigation been filed in other places?* Nothing involving Title III of the ADA. There have been a few cases involving evacuation of students who use wheelchairs who were stranded in a high school or elementary school. So a few Title II cases but nothing Title III.

### **Interagency Coordinating Committee Project Report**

Mr. Sutherland thanked Ms. Gardner and moved onto other business. Discussion shifted to the ICC websites. The goal is to capture the work the ICC is doing and tell people about it. In the short term, a page was created describing the Council and listing all members. This is the page that will be on the [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov) website. For the long term, a website is being created devoted to this Council and the work that is done. The primary function would be to collect information from different sources about people with disabilities and emergency preparedness. For example, FEMA has published a dozen or more publications dealing with people with disabilities and emergency preparedness. The Easter Seals, National Organization on Disabilities, Center for Disease Control, Health and Human Services and others have material. Mr. Cantos has been working with the subcommittee to locate materials and pull them together to become a “Toolkit” or clearinghouse. Mr. Sutherland turned the floor over to Ollie Cantos.

Mr. Cantos explained that the subcommittee is using cross agency work to put together resources and information from government and nongovernmental sites. Once all the information is centralized, this Toolkit will be a living document. As new information develops, it will promote greater dialogue between agencies at the local, state, and national levels and with nonprofit organizations and private businesses. He recognized the work the subcommittee has done to accomplish this.

Claudia Gordon informed the group that the first page, going live any day, is the Interagency Coordinating Council Page. There will be information about the council, meeting schedules, agendas, etc. The projected launch date of the tool kit will be listed as the one year anniversary of the Executive Order. Everyone’s input is welcomed and attendees were encouraged to share information. Work of the eight subcommittees will be represented on the website as well as a “thank you” for everyone who has made a contribution.

Mr. Sutherland added this is a huge project and the committee is about three-fourths of the way there. When the report is submitted to the President in July, the website will be ready to go live.

#### Questions and comments

- *Dr. Margaret Giannini suggested that it would be useful to link agency web pages to this site. Who should we work with in your organization to provide you information we have?* Send it to [Ollie.Cantos@usdoj.gov](mailto:Ollie.Cantos@usdoj.gov). He will send a note of receipt and make sure it is appropriately cataloged with the web developers.

Dan Sutherland continued and introduced a newsletter that will be issued on behalf of the Council. The newsletter is modeled from the Transportation Department’s *United We Ride*

*Newsletter* relating to their Executive Order about people with disabilities on transportation. The title, *Emergency Preparedness Now*, is a default title and open to change. Newsletter distribution will include the widest possible audience. The disability community will see their government is working on this problem and there are resources where they can go and tap into for more information. They will be encouraged to go down to the firehouse and get involved in the local community. First responders will see this is an issue they should be focused on. Building managers of various federal agencies will be made aware that agencies are concerned about their employees with disabilities along with emergency evacuation teams. The plan is to create the newsletter and distribute it to all council members who will then distribute it through their own mechanisms.

The first issue of the newsletter includes a short interview with Secretary Chertoff who talks about the importance of this work. It will be published quarterly and include an interview with a principal government official who is focused on this issue. John Hager will be featured in the second newsletter. Cabinet secretary or whoever from a Federal agency along with governors or mayors will be appropriate. The purpose of the first newsletter is to introduce people to the entire concept, so on the front page is a picture of the President signing the Executive Order. There will be a profile of the Council and the work that is being done, including a paragraph on each of the topics the Council is working on. There will be a box to highlight some activity, such as Elaine Gardner's case. The newsletter will contain quick updates on things. The last page lists all committee members. Thought was given to create a logo for the Council, but it took a year to come up with the DHS logos. The system is just too slow.

Claudia Gordon encouraged the Committee to share thoughts and welcomed their ideas. Everyone has an equal stake and contribution to the newsletter and asked them to e-mail her with any suggestions.

Mr. Sutherland continued with an explanation of the three ways distribution will occur: 1) posted on the website, 2) e-mailed, and 3) hard copy mailed out. Recommendation was made to do an article on the Commissioner of New York City who had to evacuate more than 2,000 people from the area in and around the World Trade Center. Mr. Sutherland suggested an interview of a firefighter who is deaf and other people with disabilities in the first responder community.

Ms. Gordon pointed out that the primary purpose of the newsletter is to bring more visibility to the critical work that is underway here. There is a need for communication that spotlights the work that is going on behind the scenes: the website, the newsletter, and other mechanisms where the word can build momentum inside and outside the Federal government to show exactly what we are doing.

Mr. Sutherland assured the group that the newsletter will be produced in accessible formats and apologized that today's format was only on a screen. He will send a draft to any who would like to look at it and comment prior to release. The goal is to get it out within the next month. The second one is scheduled for release with the President's report so two would go out by July. Distribution is scheduled quarterly. He asked the attendees to give any

comments or suggestions to either him or Claudia.

Ms. Gordon informed the Committee about the continuing hard work being done on the annual report to the President required through the Executive Order. Each subcommittee will submit a five-page summary of the key accomplishments that took place during the Committee's work over the last year. Useful practices identified in each area will be included. The result will be various initiatives that were undertaken according to the Council's direction and in fulfillment of the Executive Order. Each subcommittee is asked to provide valuable recommendations that they are able to identify and submit in the body of the comprehensive Executive Report, to be submitted to the President. The document will be about 50+ pages. There is a timeline set forth to provide guidance on the timing of various stages to get the report ready.

The first submission, a five-page draft, is due from the subcommittees on April 1. By May 23 we will have a good working draft for the Council to review and provide feedback. The Principal, points of contact, and those agencies who did not chair a subcommittee will review and provide feedback at that time. There will be two weeks for review and comment at the DHS Secretary's office. The timeline works backwards on from this point. Any feedback, questions, or concerns are welcome now or later, even when the report is in its final stage.

Mr. Sutherland asked the Council to make comments early on. If they have concerns with the time line, let us know that, too. The value of the report we wrote to Congress in the CRCL Office last year is as we drafted it and circulated to various parts of the agency, we committed to do what we said because we told Congress we did it. It is an effective accountability tool to get some things done and delivered.

Discussion and questions from the group

Jeff Rosen suggested that the yearly report is an opportunity to build in some metrics to what has been developed. He offered NCD to assist in developing a process in the production of a status report to see where we began and where we are going. Long range strategies are a good place to start right now.

Ms Gordon suggested that long-term goals should be considered as we work on the immediate projects. Mr. Sutherland recommended that the group consider metrics to measure what has been accomplished. The polling data that the National disability and Harris Research already completed on where first responders are in their preparation was a suggested starting point, but may not work. He encouraged everyone to focus on measurable accomplishments.

Dr. George Bouchillet, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities, pointed out that the schedule for the annual report production timeline did not clearly define the process that it will take for each department's review process. He asked if there is clearance with the departments. He indicated that it needs to be cleared through OMB prior to going to the President, which is not built into the timeline.

Debbie Fulmer, SRA, responded that clearance will occur as it goes through the draft process in each subcommittee. It is the subcommittee's responsibility to get approval for their part

prior to going to the Secretary's Office on June 13.

Mr. Sutherland assured the group that the report will go for interagency clearance before the White House signs off. There will not be a month turn around time. He asked for Christopher Kuczynski's thoughts. Mr. Kuczynski responded that having the July 26 internal deadline moves the clearance process along very well. It will need clearance within all the agencies and participants on the Council. His agency can get it cleared in a couple of weeks if needed.

Cheryl King, Federal Communication Commission, indicated that the committee chairs met with Claudia and Dan and did discuss the internal processes of approval. Though she did send a draft to Ms. Gordon, it is not the official interagency subcommittee submittal. It was to get initial feedback. The reports will be run by each agency by subcommittee participants and the final draft reviewed as expeditiously as possible to get the document to DHS. Each point of contact will return the report with comments and DHS will turn it back around as quickly as possible. The FCC subcommittee is aware of the process necessary to meet the various deadlines.

*Is it correct that the report requires OMB clearance prior to submission to the President?*

A review process takes place prior to the report going to the White House. The White House has its own internal review process.

## **Subcommittee Progress Report Updates**

### *Emergency Preparedness in the Workplace Subcommittee*

Brian Parsons, Department of Labor, offered information about activity from the Subcommittee on Workplace. Dr. Grizzard, Assistant Secretary, met with the subcommittee on March 10 and extended his personal welcome to the more than a dozen Federal agencies that have been active in the subcommittee thus far. They are focused on the development of a template of best practices that Federal agencies are implementing right now and raising issues for further consideration. July is the starting point of identifying how we can improve the workplace for people with disabilities. Their intent is for the template to be used as a guide at the occupant emergency planning level and at the building level. It is not necessary to have enforced regulation or policy behind it, but it does contain state of the art practices. People will see what kinds of considerations need to be made to assure their plan is fully inclusive of people with disabilities.

### *Emergency Communication Subcommittee*

Cheryl King will facilitate a meeting between the representatives in the hearing disability community and FEMA to educate both parties on what the other group is doing. FEMA is looking for ways to determine whether they have the necessary information and competency to incorporate into their programs accessibility for persons with disabilities.

### *Technical Assistance and Outreach Subcommittee*

Mr. Cantos indicated that in addition to the Toolkit, the Department of Justice identified and is entering 1,450 media contacts into one database. Once the time comes to launch the

website with the toolkit and everything else the council is accomplishing, they will communicate their efforts to the disability community, and everyone else. They will share the database with other subcommittees for use beyond the scope of this project.

#### *Research Subcommittee*

Bonnie Gracer, Department of Education, shared that the subcommittee on Research is collaborating with other Federal agencies and welcomes assistance to determine what is happening in various Federal agencies in research connected with emergency preparedness and disability. They are working with Homeland Security on a questionnaire, which will include a research segment. Their next subcommittee meeting is April 13 and would welcome the group's participation.

#### *Emergency Transportation*

Michael Trujillo, Department of Transportation, indicated that the web based transportation focused information they are developing will link to the Toolkit. This site links transportation industry and organizations associated with transportation and people with disabilities. They are compiling a directory of all contacts and links associated with this. They are hiring a consultant with expertise in the disability community to be a resource and give feedback on the work they are doing. The design based on current criteria is finished and drafts will be sent to the subcommittee tomorrow, or Monday at the latest. They will then finalize the web.

#### **Ending Discussion**

*It was requested that copies of the letters from the six governors identifying some of the things they are doing be sent to the committee along with future letters.* Mr. Sutherland replied that they would send the letters and asked the ICC members to leverage that activity.

Mr. Trujillo indicated that he would like to talk with the Oklahoma Project in Tulsa to see if they could work together and at least look at what the Department of Transportation is recommending.

Jeff Rosen informed the group that the National Council on Disability is releasing a report on emergency preparedness entitled *Saving Lives: Including People with Disabilities in Emergency Planning* on April 15, 10:00 a.m., at the National Press Club. The report contains great information including best practices from national sources. It will be made available to whoever was involved in this effort.

Mr. Sutherland adjourned the meeting.