



ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY FOR DISASTER SURVIVORS

FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) provide assistive devices for people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs that help them to receive information in their preferred method of communication. The devices are available for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or have low vision, intellectual disabilities, or other communication disabilities. DRCs have magnifying readers, tablets, captioned phones, video remote interpreting (VRI), and assistive listening devices. FEMA has accessible communication technology to supply up to 175 DRCs, if needed. DRCs are one-stop centers established in communities where disaster survivors can obtain information and assistance with applying for available disaster recovery resources. DRCs are structured for people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs so they can get information about FEMA programs and services. People with disabilities have a legal right to physical, programmatic and effective communication access.



A person who is deaf and uses sign language as their primary means of communication will have access to a qualified sign language interpreter onsite at the DRC or via VRI by using tablet devices. We also provide access to video relay service allowing deaf or hard of hearing people to make phone calls for DRC business and communicate through a qualified sign language interpreter.



A person with low vision is able to receive vital information in large print materials or by using a lighted magnifier that enlarges print material. For people who are blind, DRCs have disaster information in Braille, or on compact disc (CD) or audio tape.



In addition to the traditional TTY, DRCs have caption-amplified phones with a screen that displays a word-for-word translation of the person to whom the caller is speaking, and phones that provide amplification, clarity, and large dial buttons with Braille.



An amplified personal listener system helps someone with a hearing loss to hear conversations with a DRC representative. A small receiver unit amplifies and transmits what is being said to the disaster survivor.