



# Disability, Access, and Functional Needs Program Update for DC Commission on Persons with Disabilities

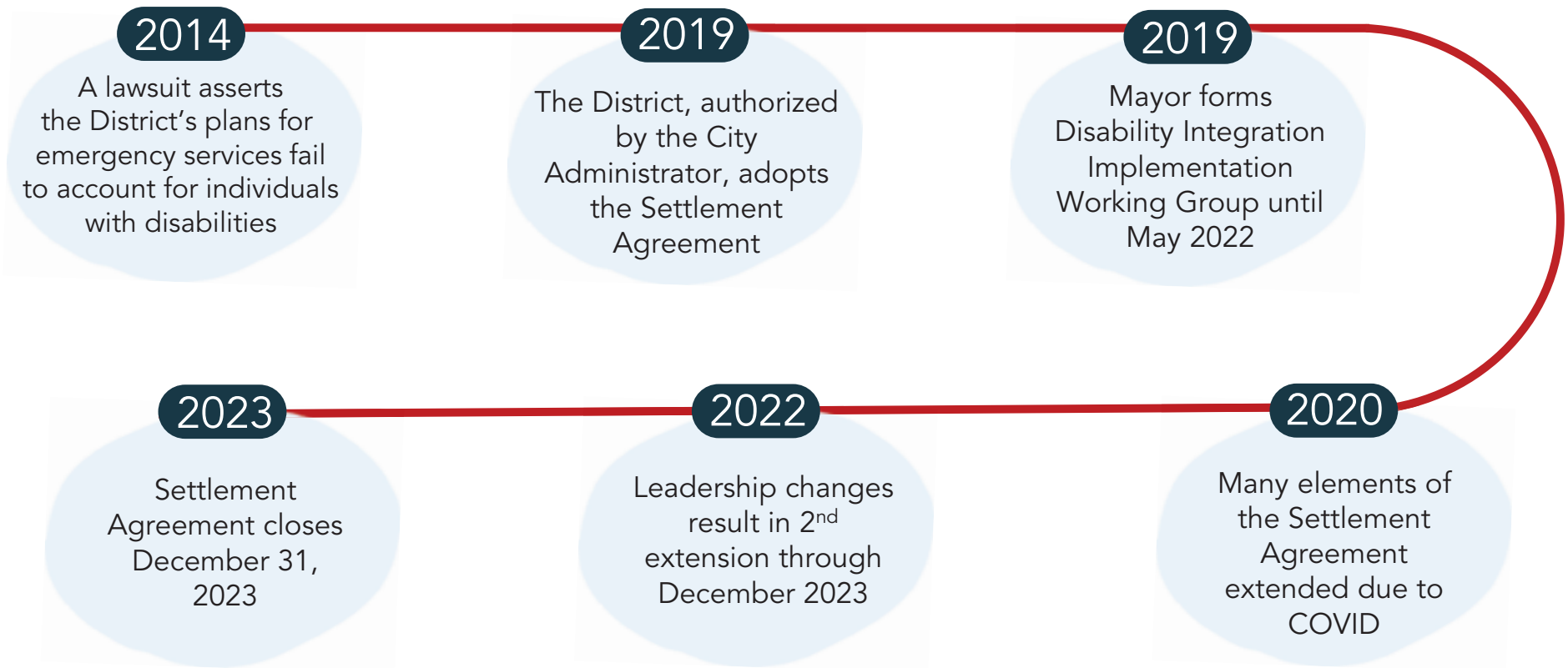
Dr. Rosemary McDonnell

Senior Accessibility Program Manager

Resilience Bureau, DC Homeland Security & Emergency Management Agency

# United Spinal Association, et al. v. District of Columbia, et al.

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## Settlement Agreement Mission Areas

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**Goal:** Ensure the needs of people with disabilities and other access and functional needs are met before, during, and after disasters

Outreach and  
Integration

Accessible  
Emergency  
Communications

Post-Emergency  
Canvassing  
Operations  
(PECO)

Evacuation  
Planning

Accessible  
Emergency  
Transportation

Mass Care  
(power and  
sheltering)

Emergency  
Planning,  
Training, and  
Exercising

Evacuation  
Devices

# DC HSEMA DAFN Program/Settlement Agreement Collaboration

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[hsema.dc.gov](http://hsema.dc.gov)



GOVERNMENT OF THE  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

# Accessible Emergency Transportation & Evacuation Update

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Created a High-Rise Building Evacuation Task Force

Conducted a Transportation Needs Analysis



Developed and Annually Update Inventory of Accessible Vehicles

Created DAFN sensitivity training for transportation operators

Ensured sufficient inventory of existing accessible transportation resources

# Evacuation Device Update

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Led by: HSEMA

Support: Department of  
General Services, Office  
of Risk Management, DC  
Housing Authority



Evaluated  
evacuation devices  
options

Identified funding  
and procure  
devices

Installed evacuation  
devices in all  
government owned  
or operated  
buildings

Created modules for  
District government  
staff on safe operation  
of devices & DAFN  
sensitivity training



# Accessible Mass Care/Sheltering Update

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Created wayfinding kits and signage for all open shelters

Made an accessible shelter opening checklist

Trained emergency shelter staff /volunteers on best DAFN practices & auxiliary aids and services

Created universal intake forms for canvassing and shelters

Assessed District shelters for accessibility

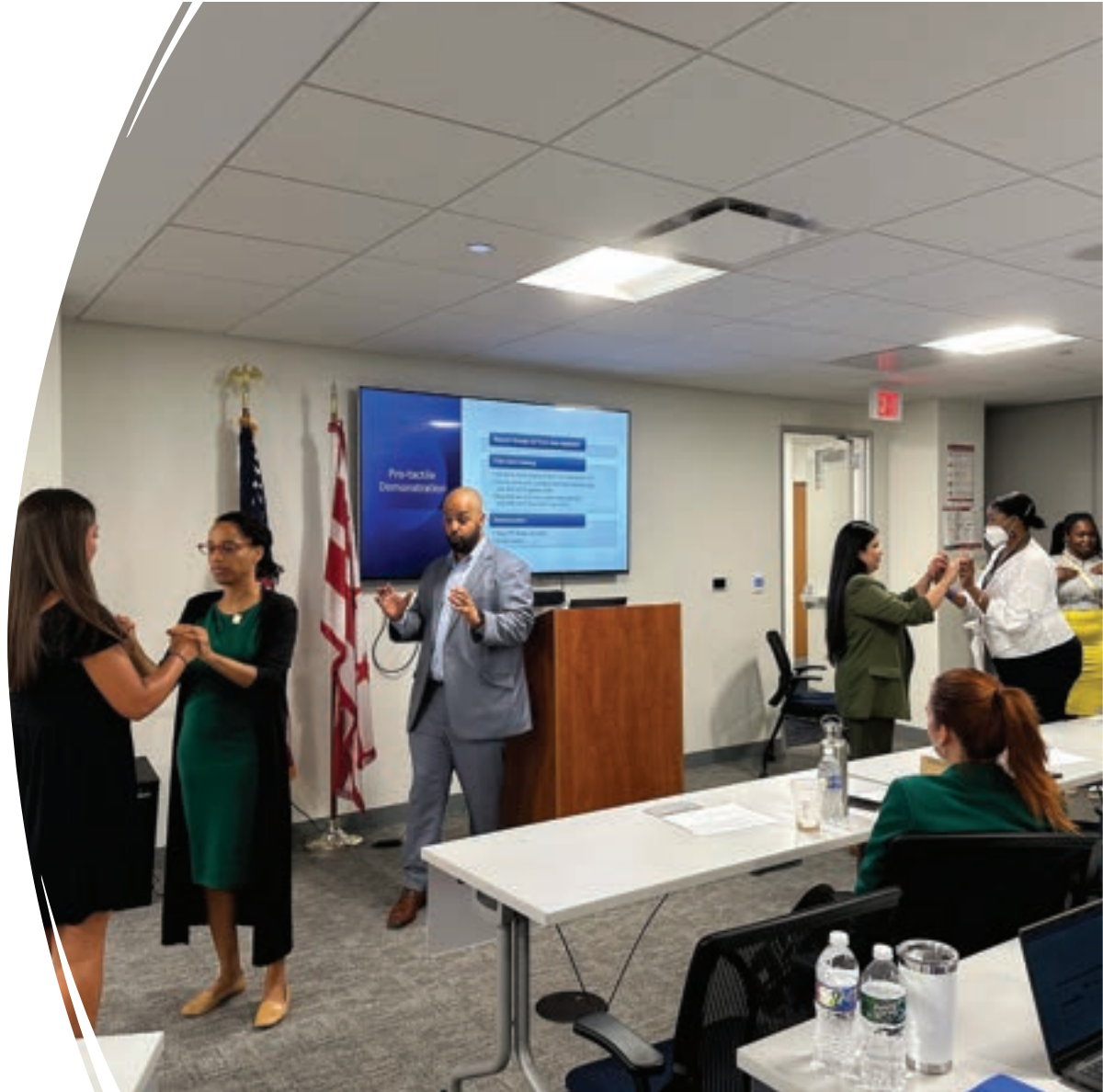
Created DAFN Shelter Program Manager Job Action Sheet



# Disability, Access, and Functional Needs (DAFN) Sensitivity Trainings Developed

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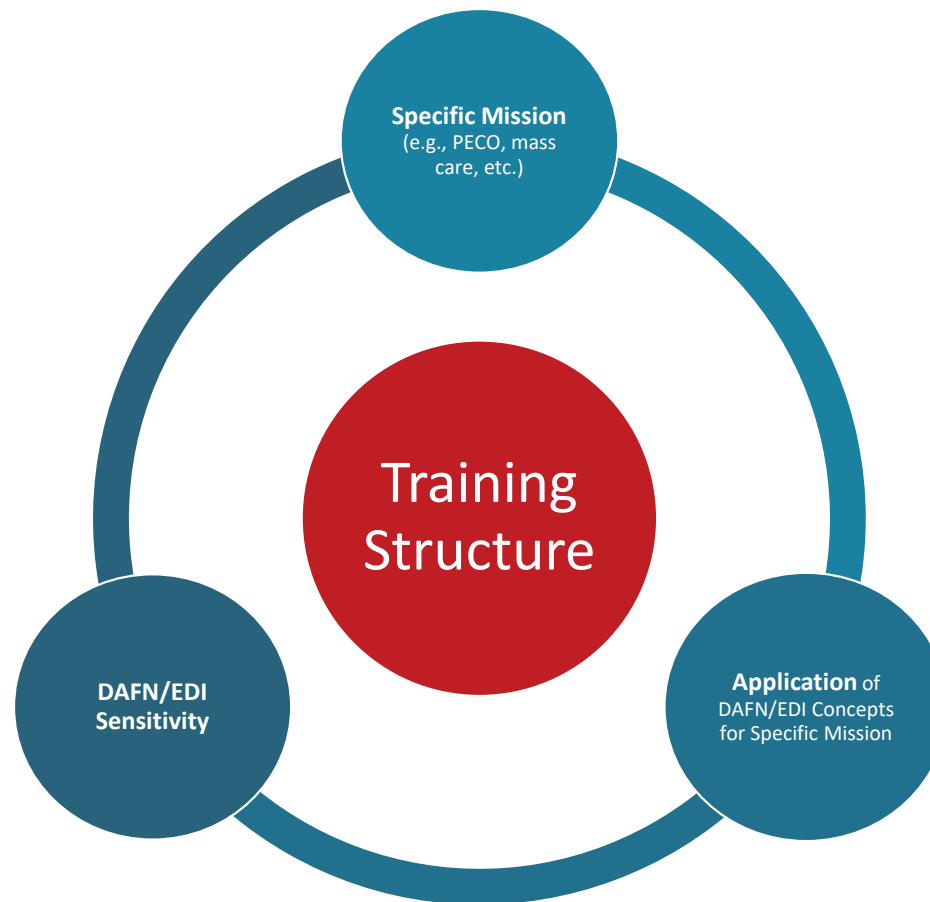
- DHS Shelter Staff Training
- DDOT Accessible Vehicle Operator Training
- ODR Video Remote Interpreting Training
- MODDHH D/DB/HH Training for Staff at Post-Disaster Sites
- PECO Rapid Needs Assessment Team Training
- DAFN/EDI Integration Training for Emergency Operations
- ORM Evacuation Chair Training





## Disability, Access, and Functional Needs (DAFN) Sensitivity Trainings, cont'd

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# DC HSEMA DAFN Program Future Planning Framework

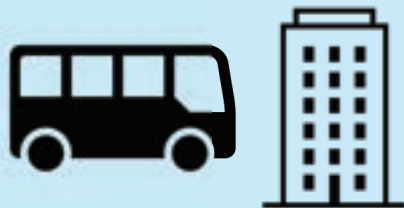
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MASS CARE  
(SHELTERING)



ALERTING  
(CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS)



TRANSPORTATION & EVACUATION



OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

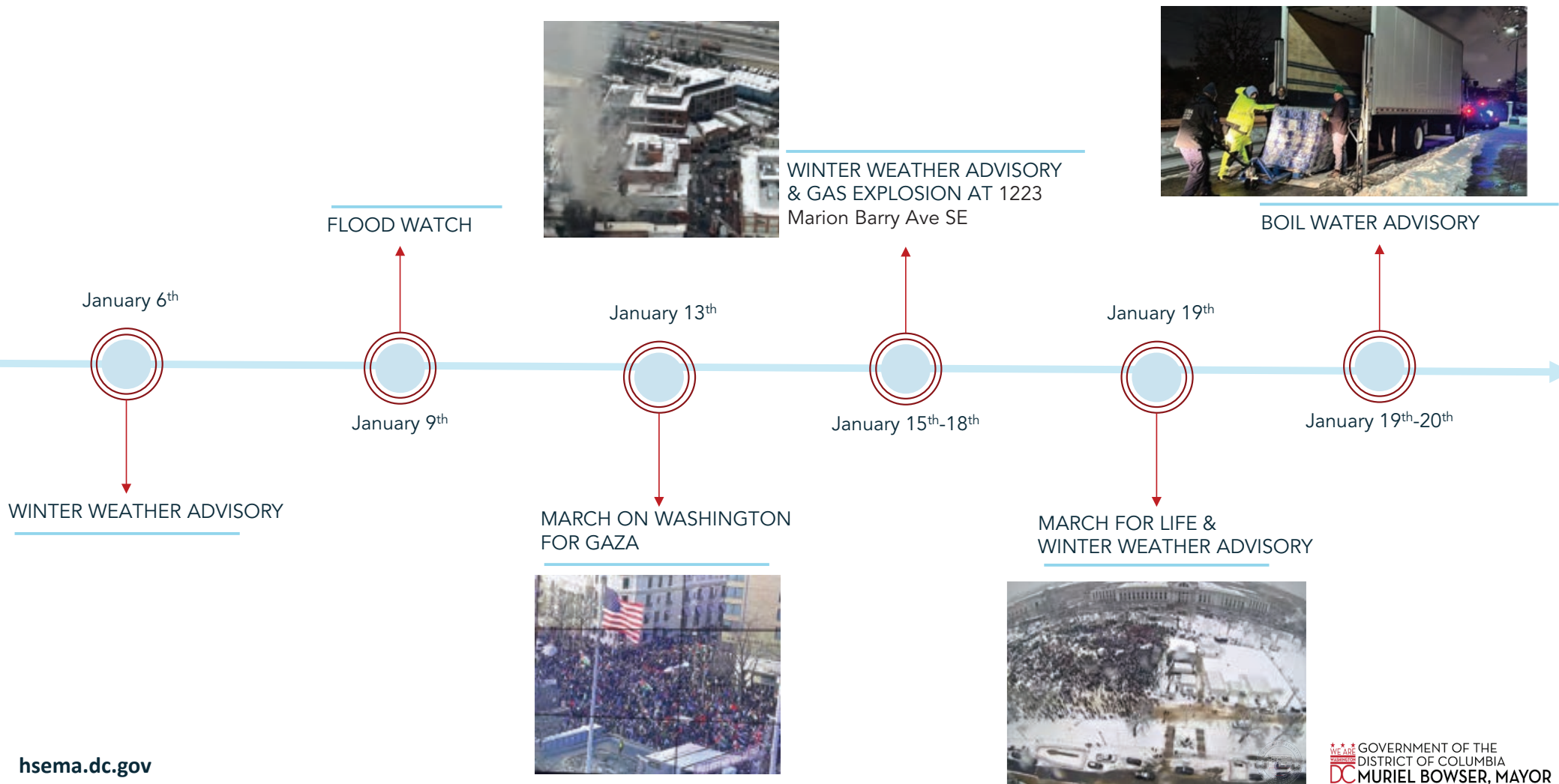
## DC HSEMA DAFN Program Interagency Workshops

11



# Case Study: 2024 Emergency Activations

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**MODDHH and MPD**



**Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing  
Active Shooter Training Focus Group**



## DC HSEMA Disability Community Advisory Group (DCAG)

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### Goals

- Provide disability-specific perspective and recommendations on emergency planning efforts
- Advise on the District's Disability, Access, and Functional Needs program



### Scope

- Review plans, training, and other materials
- Identify resources and subject matter support
- Serve as non-political advocate for DAFN program





# DC HSEMA Disability Community Advisory Group (DCAG), cont'd 15

## Previous Demographic Categories

### Represented

- Hearing Disability
- Vision Disability
- Cognitive Disability
- Ambulatory/Mobility Disability
- Self-Care Disability
- Independent Living Disability
- BIPOC

## Current Demographic Categories

### Represented

- Hearing Disability
- Vision Disability
- Cognitive Disability
- Ambulatory/Mobility Disability
- Self-Care Disability
- Independent Living Disability
- BIPOC
- Limited English Proficiency
- Age
- Individuals Experiencing Homelessness
- Socioeconomic Status
- Medical Fragility
- Incarceration Status



# 2024 AARP Community Challenge Grant

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## AARP COMMUNITY CHALLENGE

Grants to make communities livable  
for people of all ages

[aarp.org/CommunityChallenge](https://aarp.org/CommunityChallenge)

The AARP Community Challenge provides small grants to fund quick-action projects that can help communities become more livable for people of all ages

## HSEMA Awarded a Flagship Grant:

Supporting **Community Resilience** through investments that improve disaster management, preparedness and mitigation for residents

# HSEMA Community Grant Challenge Projects

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Conducted Heat Preparedness Workshops DC Senior Wellness Centers & Senior Village Sites



Developed Emergency Preparedness Calendar & Coloring Books



Developed Heat Preparedness Flyers & Magnets w/ Specific Tips for Older Adults & DAFN Populations

# Heat Preparedness Workshops

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- Conducted 17 workshops at DC Senior Wellness Centers & Senior Village Sites from mid-August to mid-September 2024
- Approx. 450 older adults attended these workshops
- Three (3) workshops were conducted in Spanish with a certified interpreter present
- Distributed over 500 cool kits, as well as heat preparedness flyers & magnets





# Cool Kits

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## Cool Kits include:

- Water
- Cooling towels
- Cold packs
- Electrolyte mix
- Sunscreen
- Cooler



# Heat Preparedness Flyers & Magnets

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## Magnets



## Flyers



# Lesson Learned and Community Experiences

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Lessons Learned
More visuals and less text on flyers
Do not assume capability of audience
Offer interpreters in other languages besides Spanish
Offer in other facilities, such as Assisted Living Facilities, skilled nursing facilities, etc.
Procure more reusable cool kits
Conduct earlier in the summer
Everyone loves snacks!

Concern about climate change in DC and how important this information is, especially to seniors aging from home (unable to travel to workshop sites)

## Community Corner

Lots of people shared how they did not know the difference between heat exhaustion/heat stroke and how to respond to each

People really appreciated the senior centers/cooling centers as spaces to socialize when it is too hot to be outside

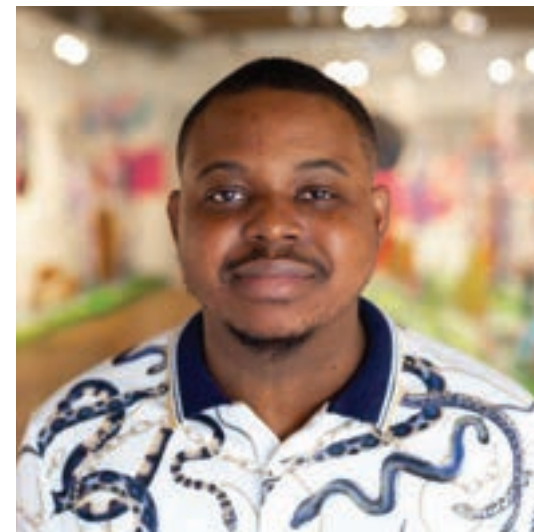
# HSEMA Emergency Preparedness Calendar

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Collaboration with Art Enables  
artist [Maurice Barnes](#) to create  
2025 DC Preparedness Calendar



*Maurice Barnes original artwork:  
Hapolo, Kyle, and Carl Watch a Bird, 2023*



**Maurice Barnes** is an incredibly talented  
illustrator and artist.

A DC-native, his preferred medium is  
colored pencils, and he brings a kind and  
joyful spirit to his work and to the studio.

Outside of the studio, Maurice loves  
spending time with his family.

# Calendar Making Process

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HSEMA mock-ups & image descriptions  
(thank you Ashley Reed! 😊)

Maurice Barnes sketch

# Calendar Page Example

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Stay informed about emergencies for you and your loved ones

## FEBRUARY

- Sign up for AlertDC at [alertdc.dc.gov](http://alertdc.dc.gov) to stay informed on weather, traffic, and other public safety updates.
- Check out ReadyDC at [readydc.gov](http://readydc.gov) to learn how to prepare for emergencies, with specific tips for people with disabilities or other access and functional needs.
- Tune in to your local TV news station or radio station to stay updated about weather alerts.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	



# Coloring Book Page Example

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[hsema.dc.gov](http://hsema.dc.gov)

## My Communication Plan


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Before something happens, it is helpful to talk to your family about what to do in an emergency. Fill out this plan with important information like names and phone numbers so your family is ready in case of an emergency.

 **My Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

 **My Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

 **My Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

 **Guardian Cell Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

 **Outdoor Meeting Spot:** \_\_\_\_\_

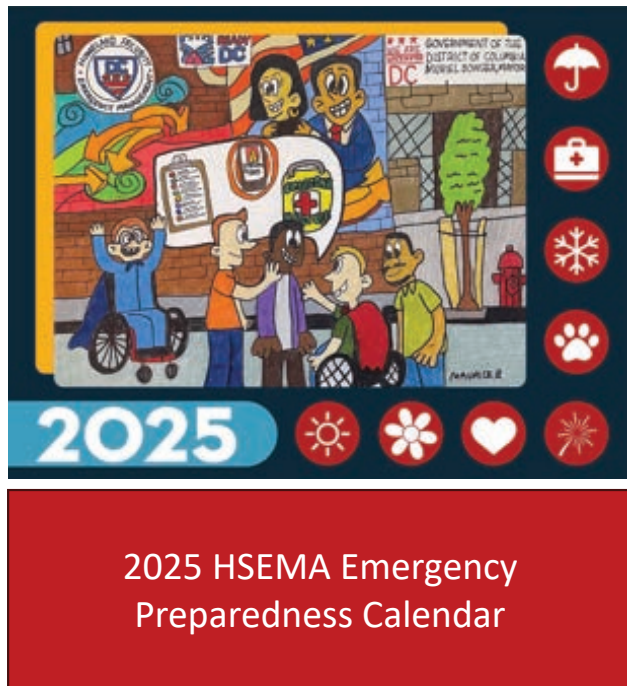
 **Neighbor/Relative Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

 **Out-of-Town Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

Always call 911 in an emergency!

# Printed Calendar Distribution Plan

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Ready.DC.gov

Disability/Aging  
Service Providers  
and Community-  
Based  
Organizations  
(e.g., Home Care  
Partners)

Community  
Outreach Events  
(e.g., Mayor's  
Senior Holiday  
Celebration)

District agency staff  
(HSEMA, ODR,  
MODDHH, EPC)

Community  
Groups  
(e.g., DCAG, DC  
Developmental  
Disability Council)



## Printed Calendar Distribution Plan, cont'd

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# DC HSEMA DAFN Program Future Planning

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## What's Next?



### Outreach and Integration

DCAG

DAFN Community Network

Emergency Liaison Officers

### Accessible Emergency Communications

2 Full-Time ODR ASL interpreters

Alert DC

Real-Time Text Alerts

### Accessible Emergency Transportation

ADA/Dash will support shuttle to operate from RFK to 7<sup>th</sup> & Frontage (supported by DDOT Ambassadors)

### Mass Care (Sheltering)

Three (3) evacuation transfer points (2 co-located with DHS Emergency Reception Centers)

"There are two primary choices in life: to accept conditions as they exist or accept responsibility for changing them"

- *Denis Waitley*



# THANK YOU

Contact Rosemary McDonnell [rosemary.mcdonnell@dc.gov](mailto:rosemary.mcdonnell@dc.gov) with any questions about the HSEMA DAFN program

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