

**2016 CSAC Challenge Awards
Executive Summary**

TITLE: First Responder Access & Functional Needs Training

OVERVIEW:

The Office of Emergency Services developed a video series which provides first responders training for evacuating individuals with physical, cognitive, and emotional disabilities.

PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE:

The San Diego County Office of Emergency Services (OES) is committed to building safer communities by involving the whole community in emergency planning, response, and recovery efforts. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly one in five people in the United States has a disability. These disabilities range from difficulties with hearing, vision, cognition, mobility, self-care, and independent living. In speaking with first responder and disability services partners, OES identified a need for a specific training designed to improve first responder understanding of disabilities, and to promote effective and compassionate methods for evacuating members of our community with disabilities.

SOLUTION:

The First Responder Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Training Video Series includes eight videos that address autism, Alzheimer's disease and memory loss, blind and low vision, chronic illness, cognitive disabilities, deafness and hard of hearing, mental illness, and physical disabilities. Each video provides important information regarding visual cues, do's and don'ts, proper behaviors, mannerisms, and sensitivities to be aware of when interacting with people in our community with physical, cognitive, or emotional disabilities. Each video includes a discussion between a local first responder and subject matter expert and demonstration scenes featuring actors exhibiting behaviors discussed and first responders employing best practices.

ORIGINALITY:

This unique, cutting-edge project is the first of its kind in this region designed

specifically to improve first responder understanding of disabilities and to ensure effective and compassionate methods for evacuating members of our community with disabilities and other access and functional needs. Authenticity was important. From the project's inception, the County's Office of Emergency Services engaged subject matter experts and individuals with disabilities in the training videos and worked closely with police and fire chiefs to recruit local first responders to participate in the videos and to advocate for implementation of the training. Ultimately, the County created an open and collaborative environment that brought a diverse group of stakeholders together, united for a common cause.

BUDGET/COST/SAVINGS:

The costs incurred for the production and implementation of the First Responder Access & Functional Needs Training Video Series totaled \$169,313. Counties looking to replicate or utilize San Diego County OES's training can do so at little to no cost, as all materials are available online.

RESULTS:

This training series has been very well received by fire and law enforcement agencies throughout the county. Several first responder agencies have made the training videos mandatory. Most notably, the San Diego County Sheriff's Department, the largest law enforcement agency in the county, committed to making this training series mandatory for their 4,000+ deputies.

PROJECT CONTACT:

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OPTIONAL SUBMISSION:

See enclosed copies of the First Responder Access & Functional Needs Training Video Series