



DIVISION OF EMERGENCY PLANNING AND RESPONSE

Disaster Response Resources



**Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services**

The Department of Human Services, Division of Emergency Planning and Response (DEPR) is prepared to assist our partners in their human services related disaster response operations. DEPR has a variety of resources to offer municipal, county, and commonwealth agency partners in response to disaster.

Resources

Personnel

The Division of Emergency Planning and Response staff are highly trained and experienced emergency management professionals that can provide support to your incident. DEPR staff act as a force multiplier, working in a collaborative effort to meet the response needs of partners and the affected communities.

The Department of Human Services also maintains an internal Disaster Response Team who can be deployed to assist when additional personnel are needed for human services related missions.

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SPECIALIZED TEAMS & STAFFING SUPPORT

Functional Assessment Services Team (FAST)



A Functional Assessment Service Team or FAST is a small team of disability experts trained to utilize their skills in a disaster setting. FAST deploys to disaster shelters and other disaster service centers to assess disaster survivors and determine what resources are needed so they can access the available services while

maintaining their health, safety, and independence. FAST is not medical care, but rather reduces the burden on medical resources by providing accommodations and other assistance.

Sample Deployment: FAST completed access and functional needs assessments at a Red Cross shelter in Northeast PA following a multi-family fire (February 2024).



Emergency Behavioral Health (EBH)

Emergency behavioral health team members provide psychological first aid to survivors in need of additional support to cope with feelings and emotions caused by the disaster.

Sample Deployment: Supported a county EBH Team in north central PA providing psychological first aid for flood survivors following Tropical Storm Debby (August 2024).

Logistics Support

Logistics support personnel will accompany any PADHS equipment deployed to the field and assist in establishing and maintaining site operations for human services related missions.

Shelter / Mass Care / Disaster Human Services Staffing Support

Mass care personnel can operate or assist in operating shelters for people and/or pets. Personnel can also staff other mass care related services centers including commodity points of distribution (C-PODs), feeding sites, or other disaster service centers.

Sample Deployments:

Provided staffing for bottled water C-PODs in south central PA following a large-scale water outage (August 2024).

Provided shelter staffing support for a county run shelter in Southeast PA for a limited duration until a non-profit partner could up-staff and assume operational control (June 2023).



Provided staffing for a Small Business Administration Disaster Loan Outreach Center (DLOC) and offered County Assistance Office benefits reviews and energy assistance applications next to a land lease community impacted by flooding (October 2023).

Technical Assistance & Coordination Support

PADHS maintains a vast network of whole community stakeholders who support mass care needs in PA. Stakeholders include disability, faith based, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), private sector, and governmental partners at all levels.

Stakeholders are organized into several Mass Care Task Forces. Task Forces help determine what unmet human services needs have been caused by the disaster, what resources are available, and formulate an operational plan to meet the needs.



Support for a local level incident may consist of a Task Force activation under PADHS' leadership to provide coordination support and operational planning or simply an introduction to one or more stakeholders who can support locally driven coordination.

Sample Deployments:

During the COVID-19 response the Feeding Task Force coordinated production and distribution of 5.1 million meals. The Sheltering Task Force coordinated non-congregate shelter and provided guidance to local jurisdictions on reimbursement. The Disabilities Integration Task Force gathered input from disability stakeholders on pandemic impacts to access and functional needs populations (March 2020).



The Housing Task Force provided coordination support to local stakeholders in Northwest PA during a housing crisis where 65 tenants were in danger of eminent displacement from a long term stay hotel due to building condemnation. Response activities included congregate shelter planning, bedbug eradication, as well as coordination with local government officials and social services professionals (November 2023).

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

PADHS has a cache of equipment and supplies ready to deploy in support of mass care missions. This equipment can be requested through standard resource request procedures. Equipment can be requested with or without staff support. Please note, only Commonwealth employees can operate Commonwealth owned vehicles.

*Specification sheets for each asset are in development with a target release date of summer 2025.



Mass Care Equipment

PADHS' mass care cache includes MREs, bottled water, hygiene kits, blankets, and three kinds of cots (standard, bariatric, and accessible). PADHS' 1,000 accessible cots are useful both in a shelter setting or as medical cots when IV poles (also included in the cache) are added.



Disability Integration Equipment



PADHS provides several resources that can support people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs during disasters. These include our specially trained [Functional Assessment Service Team \(FAST\)](#) as well as our Disaster Accessibility Kits, which provide a selection of assistive technology devices to improve communication and access to disaster services.

Mobile Client Services Center

- 32-foot office trailer designed to provide support to field operations
- Deployable with [communications equipment](#), if desired



Client Services Tents

- 570 Sq Foot, Climate Controlled Western Shelters to provide services to clients in a temporary location or as a shelter for up to 12
- Fully standalone with lighting, HVAC, power generation, and water anchors
- ADA door allows accessible entry to the shelters



Communications Equipment

- Cellular Flypack Hot Spots
- Satellite Internet Connectivity
- Commonwealth-wide Portable Radios
- [Adaptive Technology to Support Access and Functional Needs](#)
- Computer Caches to Support Field Operations

Pet Shelter Tent

- 500 Sq Foot, Climate Controlled, Deployed Logix tent to provide sheltering options to pets in a temporary location.



Mass Care Trailers

- Shelter support for up to 50 individuals in one trailer intended for rapid deployment. Supplemental supplies can be requested to increase capacity
- Push packs include standard cots, blankets, and hygiene kits



COMING SOON! Accessible Shower Trailer

Expected summer 2025.

- 3 regular shower stalls
- 1 ADA accessible shower stall



Mobile Power Resources

- 25 kW, 3 phase, trailer mounted generators
- 12 kW, 1 phase, light tower generator
- 7 kW portable generators



Vehicles

- Box Truck – 26 foot
- F450 Super Duty Trucks
- Cargo Trailers – 24 foot
- 4x4 UTV

