CFILC

Disaster Strategies Coalition Meeting

REMOTE CART

11/12/20 1030am – 12:00pm

>> JUNE KAILES: Okay, great. Hi, Ron.

>> SHERI BURNS: Hi, Ron.

>> RON HALOG: I like your scarf.

>> SHERI BURNS: Thank you. It is keeping my neck warm. We haven't gotten the heat adjusted in our building. It is like 62 degrees in my office.

>> JUNE KAILES: People that are not in California are going to make fun of us, you know that.

>> SHERI BURNS: I know. 62 degrees. Boo‑hoo.

>> I woke up to frost and temperatures in the 20s here in Oregon.

>> RON HALOG: Sandi, I just left the DD council meeting.

>> I forgot how quickly I became unmarried to the second Wednesday of every month.

>> RON HALOG: We had to switch it out for Veterans Day. But we had a presentation on intersectionality.

>> Good morning everyone. Go ahead, June.

>> JUNE KAILES: Go ahead.

>> I just want to let everybody know it is two minutes after 10:30. We look as though we have captioning up and running. So, for those of you who would like to take advantage and use the captioning feature, you should see on the bottom tool bar of your Zoom screen the box with the letters CC in it. We are very grateful to have Denise here with us today doing closed captioning. And we will also be recording today's session and posting it on the Disability Disaster Access and Resources website afterwards. We are excited to have a package of FAST experts here with us today. And last but not least, if anyone has any issues in the Zoom room while on the meeting today, please send me a message in the chat, if possible, and I will send you the call in number. I will put it there as a place holder. I know many of you have my cell phone number. If you don't have it, you are welcome to text me. I will put that in the chat. I will hand it back over to June, your facilitator for the disability disaster coalition meeting.

>> JUNE KAILES: Welcome to all. Just a couple of things. The handouts have already been sent out. But if you have not received them, we will send them again for part two of this focus, which will occur on December 10th, at the same time. Part two of portion of looking at California FAST. So, today is a short panel presentation. We have asked each panelist to spend about eight minutes or so presenting on their view of what is working and what needs work and a little bit about maybe their vision for the future. And then we saved at least 40‑50 minutes for a really good robust discussion, a give‑and‑take. So, I think that will be productive and fun. So, I have asked the panelists to introduce themselves when they speak. And I will do a little timing. I will give you a one‑minute warning when the eight minutes is approaching and you will hear a little chime. And then that will be your clue. So ‑‑ oh, and I did put up the FAST. I'm sorry. In the chat. An evaluation link. So, in case you have to leave early or at the end of the call or whenever, if you could give us some feedback on today's call. It is a link to Survey Monkey. Again, we value your feedback and are always looking at how we can improve things here. Christina, you have the slide right? So I will ask you to put them up. Today is really looking at FAST, Function Access Service Teams and the California experience. We know that some of listening have experience in other states and we are anxious to hear from you as well. So, I'm June Kailes. I'm based in L.A. And my work really focuses on building competencies in healthcare and emergency services to ensure that people with disabilities and others with access are integrated and included in the whole gambit of service delivery, policies, processes, procedures, training and audits. One of the things moving the emergency world from that vague special needs label that we all loved to really integrating more of a functional needs focus in the planning and response.

My work is primarily with states and counties and cities in developing inclusive emergency management plans. So, today our objectives ‑‑ the slides went away. Yeah. Slide two there. We're really going to look at history, vision, development and look at constraints, weaknesses and what does the road forward look like. I will take the part about history. And because I have been around for a while, decade before [indiscernible] really as far back as the '70s and '80s, a handful of us documented the experience, deep and dramatic lack of quality that people with disabilities experienced. For example, the kinds of things we were seeing back then were people being turned away from shelters. Wheelchair user, people who were blind or deaf. Sometimes separated from their families and sometimes institutionalized. So, we were thinking of something we could do better and kind of came up with that FAST concept because for decade I have been advocating we have to close the service gaps and stop the civil rights violations by really integrating the expertise of the disability community and the lived disability experience into emergency services. So, in 2007, I actually had the opportunity under a contract with California Department of Social Services to work with a team there to further develop the FAST concept plans and a training course that was actually approved down the road by FEMA. So, the vision, the next slide, was that we could do better when we work smarter together by really getting partnership with the community, with cities, counties and state and the Red Cross. The problem was we were ready to help, but centers and other community‑based groups were turned away because we didn't, quote, have the proper credentials. So, we weren't known and we weren't kind of certified or whatever it took to build the trust. So, what we looked at was it was a given that emergencies degrade or [indiscernible] critical support systems that many of us live and depend on. The equipment ‑‑ a little outside noise here. The equipment, the customized environments and supplies were disproportionately impacted by those things that don't work well. So, we're on the slide that says vision, slide five, I think it is. Yeah so. That was to blend competencies, skill sets of both government and community disability services to really provide assistance to people with complex and urgent disability‑related needs. So, those competencies were really thought to translate into nimble, flexible and really a scalable response that wasn't constrained or confined by rules that demanded staying in some artificial lane of focus. And really advocacy that translated into holding all accountable for helping to avoid violating civil rights and including response teams that were not only for and about, but most importantly were of, by and with people with disabilities, including people who were represented the whole gambit of disabilities. You could create the list because I know you know it. The team members who identifies people with disabilities and have the lived experience and can apply that deeper experience in delivering support through a social model versus a medical model lens. Because a lived experience, the details, the diversity, the nuances and the complexity of living with disabilities really can't be duplicated or always thoroughly understood by those without a disability. So, we really were looking at integrating a listening, learning, respecting and incorporating what people were telling us they needed in terms of emergency planning and response competencies that really took it into account the complexity s of maintaining one's health, one safety and surviving emergencies. So, one of the things that we often talk about in training was what vulnerable, fragile and medically acute to the untrained eye was often just living with disabilities. And that was one of the important things that those embedded in this service systems brought to these teams. So, the vision was, on slide six, to really bring that cross disability knowledge to the teams and apply the core IL values. Really honoring people's dignity of risk, choice and self‑determination. So, slide seven, the vision, again, was identifying, remedying and retooling interventions so to get past the biases and the stereotypical beliefs about disability and applying the social model. So, I'm going to stop by just saying with the last slide that I have been thinking a lot about what would FAST 2.0 look like? And we know that the current model is a heavy lift for some counties and with, you know, struggling with budgets and other things. So, we need to look at that. We need to look at does the focus maybe need to be broadened? And how do we make sure that the whole community is included? And kind of looking at the training and the evaluation of the FAST program as well. So, hopefully in the second part of this discussion today, we will get to that. So, Ron, I'm going to turn it over to you, our first panel member, and take it away.

>> RON HALOG: June, thank you so much. I'm glad to be here. My name is Ron Halog and I wear multiple hats. Right now I'm working for Independent Living Resources Solano Contra Costa County. And I do a lot of work with ‑‑ where we are trying to do outreach for training for people with disabilities and also seniors. Try to get them prepared for any kind of disasters that may come. And, you know, right now, we have been mostly working with the PSPS, public safety power shutoffs for those who don't know, for California. Many people have been impacted by that and trying to work with CFILC to prepare them and get resources out to them. Mostly, Alameda County FAST team member. I became one back in 2015, I believe, 2016. Somewhere around there. We have members with two coming on board as soon as they do the pledge, the swearing in. We have been working with the different ‑‑ two different ILCs over in the Berkeley northern Alameda County and CRIL down in the southern Alameda County area. Back then I used to be the executive director for CRIL. It gives me a tie‑in both ways. Right now we have two members from the IL field that are FAST team members. Myself and Jenny from the CIL. We didn't want to have the FAST team go underneath the medical model. And so, in doing so, we kind of came up with the idea ‑‑ this is Sandi's idea. I'm sure she will be telling you a little bit more about it. But having the two different ILCs and WID as part of a resource partnership board to oversee the FAST team. To make sure that FAST was not going to go underneath medical. It was going to be separate. That we were going to be really focusing on what needs there were in the community. During this year, FAST has been deployed two different times. And during these times, it has been a little bit tough. It has definitely been different just because of the fact we are living in a COVID‑19 environment. Before we were deployed and we could go to the shelters. It is not like that now. It is very much to the point where any time you go, you have to mask up. The two different deployments that we have been faced with is the safe ground hotel shelters. Making sure that anybody going into the hotels were going to be getting that assistance. So, we were going in there. And then also for California, you know that there's been wildfires. And the wildfires for us it is like we have had Santa Clara, the SUC fire, which was pretty much part of Santa Clara County, Alameda County, San Joaquin County which is the second largest in California.

We were deployed out there to make sure people needing shelters were getting supports before they go to the hotels. So, we were part of that network. For us, I think as far as the communication goes, it has been tough for our guys. We have nice connection, nice communication with the state. But sometimes it gets skewed for what we need for our general area or for mutual aid. I will share this one story. We had an exercise called Urban Shield. And this was about two and a half years ago. And Urban Shield was an exercise where we learned what we could do during a deployment. And just during that initial exercise, what we found out was that the state had actually issued out FAST team state members to be deployed in our local areas without informing us. And so, for us, it was kind of like wait a minute. We could go to Oakland. Instead, we got shifted down to Fremont. And ‑‑ but it just seems that communication needs to be a little bit more tighter with what we're doing and what we're going with. And then also just for looking forward for us, one of the ideas ‑‑ I met with one of our coordinate nears in Alameda. One of the things we could be more beneficial with is having connection with the emergency personnel up front. Maybe be at the EOC so we could get that information straight up front. I know they do it differently in different counties. Contra Costa County does it differently. There's a coordinator there that helps out. There's three of them. For us, we don't have one. We are still working our way through that. I know that there's funding that we're looking at trying to incorporate. But for us, having somebody at the EOC who's specific job is this would be beneficial for us. Right now we have a coordinator who is split between CCS and this. And during these times, it can be very, very tough, very, difficult to have that deployment, have that coordination. So, for ‑‑ another thing too is I think, you know, with FAST, it is a great concept. But I think it needs to be incorporated with more of the ILCs. Maybe with our partnership that we have now, it's great. But then having multiple meetings with them would actually go a lot farther. I know when Sandi was our coordinator, we were getting a lot of information. All the time. And Sandi, I praise Sandi. She did an awesome job in keeping us informed and then having us deployed. I think Sandi, when you were here, we were actually deployed in every single event. We didn't miss one. And, you know, I think it comes down to the person who is going to be here who is going to be helping us out and how that coordination comes into play. The other thing that I think we do need help and support is, once you become a FAST team member, there seems to be a separation. You are a FAST team member. Great. What other connection? If there's not a disaster, what happens? If there's a way we could stay more incorporated, maybe more training or support. I know Contra Costa County had a training, which was great. I asked could current FAST team members be a part of that. Ron, this is for first‑timers. There needs to be more follow‑up work to make sure they stay connected and updated and we really do know what the communication flow is that is coming through. You know, I am also part of the Bay Area ‑‑ if we could incorporate what Bay Area UASI, urban safety ‑‑ I forgot the A. Safety initiative. I always forget that one. And so, maybe have that incorporated with FAST team as ‑‑ and we were even thinking about it would be neat to have CERT team members so these aren't just different silos out there. But there's a way we could incorporate this all together. Because when we do neighborhood preparedness, when we look at it and we tell people who do you know in your neighborhood who might need support ‑‑ and this last training I had, I had a group saying we know, Ron. Right down the street I have a person who is elderly. She's in a wheelchair. And we automatically know. And that's where I think that we can actually get more involved into it too. Is part of the preparedness and the overarcing of FAST team. So, June, I think that is pretty much what I had as far as an overview.

>> JUNE KAILES: Thanks, Ron. At least a lot and a lot to unpack. So, I think we will get back to a lot of your points in the discussion. That's good work.

>> RON HALOG: Thank you. Again, I'm throwing that out there. There's a lot of learning that is going on with FAST, especially now in COVID. I think it has been ‑‑ having PPE, having that equipment because we know that PPE in the initial phases were going to the big need was for medical. We were not considered medical. So, that was an issue for us. Even organizations that I work were calling me up when I was ‑‑ Ron, where do we get PPE? And that was a difficult task. So, definitely there's some routes of communication that I'd love to see built on. June, back to you.

>> JUNE KAILES: I will turn it over to Sheri, I think you are next. And I think we have some slides Sheri sent over as well, Christina. Sheri Burns, over to you. And I will set the timer here.

>> SHERI BURNS: There we go. My camera wasn't working there for a second.

[Laughter]

>> SHERI BURNS: You are going to hear probably some very similar recommendations and ideas that Ron just shared with you. I think they are probably fairly universal and not specific to any particular county. But June asked me to cover basically from our perspective and Santa Clara County what is working, what needs work and what is a vision for the future. So, a little bit of background on myself. I'm the executive director of Silicon Valley independent living center. So one of the 28 CILCs covering California. So, I have been involved for a number of years. This is very, very important to me and important that we integrate disability services, disability knowledge and integrity into everything that we're doing as we improve on our preparation and response to any type of disaster. I also serve on our local voluntary organization active disaster for Santa Clara County which is CADRE. And SVILC was a founding member of CADRE when it started in the early to mid 90s after the earthquake. So, we have a lot of experience in this area. This is something that SVILC has been involved in and making sure members of our community individually and their families are as prepared as possible. Have the resources, knowledge and tools in order to be personally prepared for disasters. But also that we have a seat at the table when we are working with our government entities and over Social Services agencies to make sure we are collaborating with the AFN framework and everything that we plan for and put together with regards to policies and procedures. So, we have one originally certified FAST team member with us and others of us have going through additional trainings. But we are waiting for the opportunity to have another FAST training here in our local area. So, what is working is that our county does have about 40 FAST members. Most of them were trained through our local Social Services agency a number of years ago. And then as I mentioned, they are also some community‑based organizations that went through of those initial trainings back in the mid to late 2000s. The Bay Area has a few members as I mentioned. In my opinion, there's far too few ILC represents in gas. We have good relationship and communications with cadre. CADRE has function teams.

[Feedback]

>> SHERI BURNS: It is co‑led by the SVILC and we work closely together to address the needs of our AFN community. And on a monthly basis, we convene a group of government ‑‑ local government folks with county OES, with the city's emergency management services and with versus [indiscernible] and individual advocates in the community workgroup. We try to address as many Bay Area‑ers that we see. Many have come up in relation to the pandemic and isolation and businesses being closed and trying to reopen under the different tiers. And sometimes how that affects our residents' access and impinges upon their civil rights and their ADA access. So, we try to address all of those issues and bring everybody up to a higher level robust complete information being made available to folks along the language spectrum, of the threshold languages as well as folks that are blind, low vision and deaf and hard of hearing. We also have a seat at the op center here in Santa Clara County. CADRE does. We take turns in that responsibility of being on call in case there's an incident where CADRE is being asked to respond. Then we are on those calls with the local OES. In the last couple of months the biggest event centered around the PSPS. We are looking at pushing at the county level and the main city here, San José and having an AFN person who is knowledgeable and is able to be involved in the discussions and planning efforts and implementation efforts during a disaster right there as it is happening. And not an afterthought. Some of other things that are working is Santa Clara County did provide a recent online refresher course. Certainly appreciate very much Vincent Fong at the state allowing ‑‑ this is the first time the state has had any kind of online FAST refresher course. And Liz Dietz, with the American Red Cross and the regional AFN coordinator for the Red Cross did the training. She did an excellent job. It was done in conjunction with the county SSA support. Gilbert did an awesome job with that refresher course. It was a couple of hours. For folks that had been FAST trained and anyone interested in learning about FAST and some of the components of FAST and working with the mass care and shelter efforts. That was wonderful. We hope to continue that. Not only here, but across the state of California. And so, what needs work? The next thing. Improve FAST training and curriculum for those who have limited personal or professional knowledge or disability safety and ADA compliance. I can't stress enough the fact that we have a fairly large CADRE here of FAST train members and certainly across the state. But I think we really do need to take a look at both the initial curriculum, how it is being taught, how it is being implemented. And also the continuing education of that FAST training through having ongoing at least once a year, if not more frequently additional support and training for previously FAST trained folks. And Ron mentioned this. There's not a lot of interaction. And I think this is another area that needs work. Bringing the FAST teams into other components of emergencies that happen even if they're minor kinds of things. Of integrating us into day‑to‑day disaster safety and knowledge within the community. There's some of that knowledge lost because I think it is not utilized. Maybe we have a disaster once a year, twice a year. Sometimes like they are more frequently now. But I think a lot of those folks have lost some of that because of not being able to utilize their skills that they learned through that original training. So, more frequent FAST training opportunities for disability advocates. I think we need folks that have personal disability experience that are trained to be involved. That was [indiscernible] [feedback].

>> SHERI BURNS: Sometimes leading these efforts and making sure ‑‑

>> CHRISTINA MILLS: Sheri, I'm sure. We are getting a lot of feedback on your headphones. Seems to be more when you move.

>> SHERI BURNS: Okay. I will try to sit still. Is this better right now?

>> CHRISTINA MILLS: Yes, it is.

>> SHERI BURNS: Thank you for letting me know. Sometimes the transmitter and zephyr don't work well together.

>> CHRISTINA MILLS: Thank you.

>> SHERI BURNS: Thank you, Christina. So, we need more folks with disabilities that are FAST trained members. They have the personal experience. It is not second nature of learning secondhand to be able to see what are the issues that need to be addressed. And I will just give you an example of recently, certainly during late August when we had the SCE fires and the CCU fire that affected Santa Cruz and San Mateo, lots of people were evacuated out of the mountain regions and the areas in both in those counties. And one of the largest shelters was opened in Watsonville, a neighboring county. They utilized the fairgrounds there which was a great setting, I think, because it was so vast. And a number of buildings could be utilized for sheltering as well as food distribution and they had a medic there. It was a great location to be able to house hundreds of people that had been evacuated from their homes. Unfortunately, the initial FAST members had to deployed there at the state level missed a lot of things that should have been caught that were ‑‑ [feedback]. Concerns for folks having to reside there temporarily. And the state, Vance Taylor, you name it, decided we needed to come in because he had gotten word that there was no needs. And he said well I doubt there's no needs when you have 600 people in a setting. So, can you go over there and take a look. So, we deployed FAST team unit from both SVILC as well as Santa Cruz. Seven of us spent better half of a day over there. And there were ‑‑

>> JUNE KAILES: Just checking in. Make sure you heard that one‑minute chime.

>> SHERI BURNS: Thank you. So, a number of issues that had been missed. Limited signage. No interpreters. Inaccessible showers. No oversized or raised cots. A number of things that the state immediately responded to when we let them know about that. So, again, making sure we have people with disabilities involved in FAST is so important. The regularly scheduled refresher courses. Ways for FAST members to work more collaboratively with the Red Cross and other shelter operators and of course better communication as Ron mentioned. The next slide is ‑‑ next slide, please. Vision for the future. Again, more structured and coordinated FAST program at the state and county levels. Comprehensive training curriculum and includes safety issues as I mentioned before. And annual FAST trainings and refresher courses. And of course, including the FAST assessment protocols and making sure shelter managers are knowledgeable about FAST. Thank you. Back to you.

>> JUNE KAILES: That was quite a feat to get all of this in. Thank you. We will get back to your important points in discussion as well. So, next is Sandi. Sandi, I will turn that timer back on. You will hear a chime at the one‑minute warning and over to you.

>> Okay. Thank you very much, June. My name is Sandi Soliday. I'm the recently retired coordinator of the Alameda County developmental disabilities council which is a policy and program planning unit in the public health department. I was also the Alameda County FAST lead and a founding executive committee member of the Alameda County VOAD. I will certainly piggy back on the things that June, Ron and Sheri talked about. I do just want to preface this by saying I am speaking now from Medford, Oregon. We recently had the Alameda fire and there was no alert notification to the community. That bears repeating. And you can imagine the impact to the disability community here. There was no alert notification to the community. So, I still very much care about preparing our community for disasters. What is working? I think that when I left, I was very concerned about the creep of the medical model. I was afraid the Alameda County FAST program would be taken over by the public health disaster manager, who also managed the medical reserve corps. And I, at that time, strengthened our relationship with our private partners, CRIL, CIL and WID. That worked well, I think it helped to protect the Alameda County FAST program and I will slide in what needs work. And this is true with any ‑‑ I think everyone would agree. In the emergency management world ‑‑ excuse me. Just getting over a cold. The change in personnel. I mean the change in personnel is a huge problem. I went to Emergency Management Association meetings. I was involved in public health disaster efforts. But I spent a lot of time educating people about the FAST program. We lack the AFN infrastructure that Sheri mentioned that they have in Santa Clara County. I had many conversations with our EOC about the need for an AFN coordinator. It was ‑‑ I don't know. I do not feel it was a priority in Alameda County. I started as a state FAST member. I had the honor of being trained by June Kailes, Richard and Bill Vogel. And I will also echo the sentiment that I think it is very important to strengthen that relationship between the county and the state. I think that's very important. Another thing that is working is that I think that the new FAST Alameda County lead who, unfortunately, is over bandwidth now, I did invite her to contribute some information. Ariana. She is ‑‑ she was an excellent choice for the lead. She was an experienced FAST member. She had a strong relationship with the disability community. Our partners embraced the choice. So, that work ‑‑ thought needs to be put into transition when personnel does change. I think FAST has to be a part of it. I wrote some notes as I was ‑‑ another thing that I think works well, a few years ago, Social Services finally named a new Alameda County Social Services, a new disasters manager, Michael Osborn. The Alameda County FAST has a strong relationship with Michael and SSA in that regard. He has a great deal of respect for the efforts of the Alameda County FAST and the objectives and goals. So, that's something that certainly is working. I think that ‑‑ and I know we are looking forward to the more robust conversation about where we go from here. But I think vision for the future, I think that definitely FAST needs to be incorporated into county emergency management efforts more. I wouldn't say it's for lack of effort from the disability community or the FAST coordinators in our county. Definitely there needed to be more education and engagement there. I also like the idea of expanding the task of FAST. I think that is important. One of the thing I did in my role as coordinate, I was often asked to write letters of support. I made informal, MOUs, with the disability organizations that I did. There was a federal grant to get money for vans. But they had to ‑‑ it was from FEMA, I think. And they had to be incorporated into disaster efforts. So, with two of the organizations that we worked with, we made an informal agreement that if Alameda County FAST needed vans and needed transport, then we would be able to use their vehicles. So, that's just an example of a way to expand some of these efforts. I think the more holistic, global view and work beyond shelters is a great idea. Anyway, I sent June a fact sheet, which I think most of you have. It is just kind of a history and summary of how Alameda County FAST worked. I know that recent deployments that Ron referenced was the first time the Alameda County FAST actually activated in Alameda County. So, I will also echo complete support for more training and exercises as we need to work with our partners to build our work and our understanding of the work. I think that's it. I think I went under my time, June.

>> JUNE KAILES: Perfect, Sandi. Thank you. Okay. Well, great. I'm hearing a lot of good things for our discussion that I look forward to. And last, but not least, Christina, same thing. I will set the timer. So, we will kind of invaded our discussion time a bit. We will still have at least a good 30 or so minutes for discussion. So, over to you, Christina.

>> CHRISTINA MILLS: Thanks, June. This is Christina from the California foundation For Independent Living centers. And I think most of the folks on the call know that disaster work has been on our priority list for quite a number of years and has especially increased over the last couple of years. It is great to hear Sandi, Ron and Sheri talk about their experiences. And it is good to see so many different folks here today participating from a variety of different agencies and non‑profits and even folks out of state. CFILC has been looking at the FAST program as ‑‑ and because we work with June, as a way to further invest in disaster work on a statewide level. And so, hearing some of the same and consistent challenges that Ron and Sandi and Sheri brought up are really elevating the need for us in the independent living community and the disability community as a whole to really figure out a way how we can get to FAST 2.0. And I think some of the ideas that I wrote down from each of the speakers will help in that conversation maybe with the state and with others that should probably be a part of this conversation. I'm really interested in learning and have been invited as a participant speaker on a variety of different VOAD calls now around the state. And while there's some consistency, there seems to be a lot of inconsistency as well. One of the things I captured today was there's a real need for a communications flowchart both statewide and locally and regionally. I think that is something we could probably start working together on immediately. I know how important that is on a variety of different levels and I can't even imagine not having that available when it comes to a disaster. Some of the other things I think are really relevant are alert systems. Alert systems countywide, statewide on a variety of different levels. I always say there's not enough alerts that we could all sign up for. Because you never know who is going to put which alert out. And I have personally experienced that living in the Bay Area. I won't count on one emergency alert system over another. It's Bert that I just sign up for all that is available in my community. I think those are two of the things we could continue to push on statewide. I also want to mention that since the state is on the call, Vincent did offer a couple of meetings ago and I have wanted to get grounded in this conversation a little bit more before I go there. But Vincent did offer the opportunity for us to hold a potential virtual FAST training for all of the ILCs that want to be part of it. Hearing Sheri say we need more ILCs staff a part of FAST, I absolutely agree. One of my concerns is when there's not a disaster, there's no communication or very little. Figures out what kind of infrastructure we could create to make sure that communication is happening, whether you are in an impacted area or not. And secondly, one of the things that comes up with that, I think, is to Sandi's point, the turnover in personnel. I think a lot of the times we don't know what the turn around in personnel is. We don't know who has left or who is retired. Congratulations, Sandi. And third, I think that it is really important for both us as a community and the state to really recognize the expertise that we bring to the table. And I'm not sure how many counties have done this and maybe some of you on the call have some experience with this. I know many of you have a range of expertise in work that you have done in disaster. But Marin County did place one of their ‑‑ systems change advocate, basically for those who are less familiar with independent living terminology, the systems change advocate is the community organizer that is a lot of times organizing the local community members, but also attending a lot of meetings and making sure that the disability voice is present on a variety of topics that need positive change and impact for people with disabilities. With that said, Marin was very successful in getting to be ‑‑ I think ‑‑ I am visualizing the org chart I saw. And I believe their systems change advocate falls within the first five people of their flow chart who is informed in the decision‑making process in Marin. I can tell you for those who don't know my husband. Of course I always know more about my husband's independent living center than the others. But my husband is the director of the Marin center for independent living. So, I use his center as an example all the time because I'm hearing about it which I feel very grateful for. So, I keep my boots on the ground too. They just recently during some fires that were impacting west Marin's area, they weren't quite in west Marin's area yet. But because of the level of leadership Marin center has with the county, it was amazing to witness the conversation coming together about how we make sure that Marin Center For independent living center who have a history of coming to the center were informed about the disaster possibly moving into their geographic area. How that would play out, who would contact them and what would happen as a result of contacting them. And so, some decisions were made at a very partnership level that allowed for people with disabilities that would absolutely need to evacuate during a disaster, especially the fires that were heading in their direction would need to leave early. Because by the time the warnings came out, it would possibly be too late. But because the center was involved in that process and because independent living bring the expertise and lived experience, the decision was made to evacuate those folks. At least give people the option to evacuate early. We weren't sure if the wind was going to move in that direction or not. But, again, because they were involved in the process, they made unanimous decision together as a team to go ahead, make contact with anybody that they knew out there. Not overstepping HIPAA requirements by any means. But making group decision for the county to call the folks that they thought were at risk in that area and the center for independent living calling the folks in that area that they thought were at risk. And I think it ended up resulting in about five individuals making the choice to evacuate. While that number might seem small, the fact of the matter is, to me, you gave five people a choice not to be in a disaster. And I don't even want to think about what that could have ended up looking like had you not given those five people the choice. So, I think that shows the level of the power we have together, working countywide with our independent living centers as part of the leadership structure and decision‑making process. So, with that, I will absolutely turn it over to you, June to get the group discussion going on this. And I do have some questions that I am sure panelists will have as well. I will wait until the end to bring those up. But I know I am grateful, June, that you and Richard and others have been part of the initial curriculum development of the FAST program. And I don't know the history of all of how we got to where we are, but I certainly see and very much value the need to move it forward. And I think for CFILC because disaster has become an elevated level of priority, we could make time to make that happen as long as our state partners feel the same way as we do. Thank you, June.

>> JUNE KAILES: Great. Thanks, Christina. Now we are going to give you all a chance to pipe in. You have been patient and listening. I think what I would like to do is use the raised hand function in chat ‑‑ I mean in the participant list if you are able to use that. If not, if you are not able to use that, kind of pipe in and just one moment to kind of reiterate some of the themes I heard related to maybe FAST 2.0 that FAST can't exist in the vacuum and not the silo FAST. We really need to think about strengthening relationships with the county infrastructure. Whether it is VOAD, CERTs. VOAD stands for voluntary organizations active and disaster. CERT, community, emergency and response team.

>> Urban Area Safety Initiative.

>> Strategic initiative.

>> JUNE KAILES: So, the focus of FAST game up guarding against medical model. Attention to the transition of staff changes and [indiscernible]. And attention to training. Updating FAST training, content, refresher training. Leader training, et cetera. So, over to you all for a discussion time. And you could also put some of your questions in chat if you are shy.

>> June, can I share a few comments?

>> JUNE KAILES: Go ahead. Good to see you.

>> Briefly I wanted to explain a little bit about how we do it in Sonoma County. One of the things we need to add to the list it is not just an AFN person in the EOC. We have lots of different roles to play. We get kind of lumped into this care and shelter piece. And we should have someone in care and shelter. We should have someone in transportation. We should have someone in logistics. We should have someone in alert warning. All those things need to be covered by an AFN person.

I tell you that because impressive an AFN person. I have spent many hours in the past couple of years. Just a little bit about my background. I work as the manager of the public authority in Sonoma County. In that role, I also extend myself to serving as the AFN coordinator in the EOC. And I am in the management section of the EOC and report directly to the EOC director. Another key area that I think you all need to develop, where I think people need to think about is communications and relationship building. That's really where people need to focus their efforts. Relationship building with all those organizations that you just mentioned. You know the VOADs, the COADs, CERTs, et cetera. Everyone needs to be involved in all those organizations. And you need to be developing those relationships. In terms of care and shelter, FAST, specifically, you need to develop a relationship with the local Human Services or Social Services agency. That's really your key to your FAST entry. It is not the EOC. It's the Social Services or Human Services agency. The human services agency or Social Services agency by law has the authority to ‑‑ or they have the responsibility for care and shelter during emergencies. They often extend that to the local Red Cross by contract or something of that nature. At least a portion of it. The Red Cross can serve a couple of disasters. But in our case, there's too many disasters or too many shelters that get opened up that require more than just a couple of shelters. Anyway, I think we need to think beyond kind of the traditional FAST role and look at what other things are essential. Even PIO, public information. Just this last go‑around, I realized early on that there were no sign language interpreters at our press conferences. And, in fact, a lot of the press conferences throughout the Bay Area, I in my role quickly brought that to the attention of our local folks and also to Vance Taylor. Within probably 24 hours, that was reversed. And there were sign language interpreters, ASL interpreters at those press conferences. So, it is just paying attention to those things and bring it to the attention of your local PIO folks. So, those are just a few things that I wanted to offer to you. But we do have a fair amount of experience here in Sonoma County and we have developed a pretty good FAST team. We have relied on the stayed and got some good help from Vincent and his folks from the state. But clearly, I still lots to learn myself. This is really a big, big job. And the relationship building and understanding how things work, you can certainly ‑‑ I need more work on that. Just this last go‑around I was finding myself not understanding all the different pieces to the puzzle. We could use a lot of work in terms of that. Particularly the state and the counties and how we get mutual support from our local counties. Because there are some really good resources available. It's just accessing them, understanding that. So, anyways, I just wanted to offer that and would be glad to be available to you folks to answer any questions.

>> JUNE KAILES: Thanks, Mike. Stay tuned because I think some have questions for you. The panelists and the rest of you are able to look at the chat. There are some questions in there you might want to consider answering. And there's one hand up from Liz. Liz, before you start, just a reminder, try to refrain from using any abbreviations so I don't need to translate what they are later. But COAD is what some counties use instead of VOAD, I believe.

>> That is correct.

>> JUNE KAILES: It stands for community Organizes Active in Disasters. So, on to you Liz.

>> Thank you. Good morning. My name is Liz Dietz and I am the ‑‑ one of the trainers and people from the FAST team representing from the American Red Cross. I am the disaster health services manager or one of them here in the northern California coastal. As well as being the first northern California coastal region disability integration regional lead. And yes, handing out business cards in the middle of a disaster is not the way to go. You have to do all of this stuff ahead of time. I'm not shy, by the way. The whole issue of everything that we're talking about was ‑‑ the biggest problem was the whole idea of COVID changing the way we worked. So, in Red Cross we went from congregate wonderful shelters where you up the gyms and fairgrounds to dormitories. By the way, Sonoma, thank you very much for your dormitories at the college. We appreciated that very much. But we had to use hotels, motels. And that changes a lot. Your points on relationship building, absolutely phenomenal point. Your COADs, VOADs, Social Services have to be talking the same language. Couple of issues we had in the fires was some of the communities were not talking to us. They were doing their own thing and it became a real big problem. I appreciated everything that Sheri Burns and her group does for all the communities because they speak to people and get things done and get FAST down to there. I appreciate everything that Vincent is doing and I appreciate being on that team to teach. But yes, it is time. We need to redo those classes. And I certainly found that after teaching the Santa Clara folks, we need to beef up a revision class, a refresher course for them. And it all points to all of us working together. And sometimes we get so siloed that we don't really communicate with one another. And that's really the important point. And I also appreciated Dana reaching out to me and to the group so that we could get things done. And it may be November, but we still have into hurricanes and wildfires. Yes, we don't have hurricanes here. But we have wildfires. It is very dry out there. If we don't get some rain, we will end up with some mess. So, thank you. I'm glad to be part of this group. I think it is fantastic and I appreciate everything that everybody is doing for the disabled community.

>> JUNE KAILES: Thanks, Liz. I see a hand up from Sandi.

>> RON HALOG: June, really quick. I just have one little comment. This is Ron, again. I think it is very, very important to build that relationship. I think we have to have some type of structure when one person leaves, that relationship leaves. And so, if we could have it built where there's a hand‑off of something. So many times I have called isn't so‑and‑so there anymore and they are gone. And so, it's like I'm starting from ground zero again. So, I think it is really important if we do have that ‑‑ that is why it is so nice to have these monthly meetings. Somebody brand new coming in, I don't know who you are. Shake their hand. That's when we used to be able to do it and get to know them. If there's a way we could have it built where yeah, we build the relationship there. But then have some type of pass‑off would be really helpful for us. Sorry, Sandi, for cutting you off.

>> That is okay. I want to address that first question from Sara. Do FAST teams ‑‑ because that is something I meant to mention. Do FAST teams have any budget and if so, who funds? Where do they get equipment needed, et cetera? Such a good question. It does speak to where should FAST ultimately be housed. Should it be housed in government? Because government does have bigger budget. That is honestly why I put so much effort into the Alameda County FAST because I was allowed to buy radios, by backpacks. The off side of that is, you know, when you're working in government, bureaucracy can be a soul killer. I had to work with HR, with risk management. We had to get non‑county folks background screened which, again, I paid for. So, know that varies from county to county. It is an important element of FAST. I'm just going to say educating the entire emergency management circle is ultimately one of the most important things you could do. I walked into many shelters as I said. This is the first time Alameda County FAST was activated. We always provided mutual aid. It was so much easier when we walked into shelter and they know who FAST was. I have walked into shelters and no one knew who I was talking about. I walked into a shelter in San José and as soon as Liz walked in, FAST was treated respectively. Thank you.

>> JUNE KAILES: Thank you. I think you said it, but who activates FAST. I know frankly in L.A. that has had a number of FAST train, over the years. When the fires were raging, I would get emails and say how come FAST isn't activated? What is going on here? And I don't know if that was an experience for the rest of you. But it was like never did get answered. What happened to all that FAST training in this very large county and the activations that at least I'm not sure happened here.

>> Well there is on that fact sheet I sent you, June, there's the activation process. And I did that because I had all new leadership in public health when I left. And I was trying to train them. Look this happens. But traditionally what happened when we got mutual aid requests, they would come from the county. They would go up to the state and then they would come down to the FAST coordinators.

>> Generally comes out of the care and shelter desk in the EOC. Vincent can probably speak to it too.

>> CHRISTINA MILLS: This is Christina. I have been wondering that too because we hear from the ILC staff that our FAST folks never get calls depending on where they are but they are available.

>> SHERI BURNS: This is Sheri. Totally agree with that. And I think that goes back to what me and Ron were saying earlier. We are far underutilized and I think it is an aware issue. And part of the reason is there's not an AFN in seat at each of the op centers in all of the counties. And Mike talked about having multiple seats because there's so much coordination that needs to be done on so many fronts. We need to have one person who is knowledgeable in these areas. Because a lot of times they are not even aware that they need to take a look at the AFN issues at the shelters. And also, less mentioned too is that sometimes the shelters are operated by other entities. It could be the county. It could be other ‑‑ churches or other groups that step up as opposed to the Red Cross setting up the shelter. So, you have got various entities that may be ‑‑ the Red Cross knows about us. But some of the others do not. Or they just don't think about it. That is why we need to be always at the seat and at every seat so that these are not an afterthought.

>> JUNE KAILES: Hearing Sandi, Christina, Ron, here's a question regarding the liability issue. I know never seem to get really worked out in some of the counties that Ruth said, one of the issues was they didn't deploy ILC folks because they didn't know how to handle the insurance issues with the county. And I think that repeatedly ‑‑ that government workers are covered as county employees. And yet, we have always had this open‑ended question about coverage. So, can you all address that please?

>> I will. So, when Ron said that they had two new Alameda County FAST members and they were just waiting for them to be sworn in, all that members that aren't county members, because they are already disaster workers and they are already covered. Once they are sworn in as a disaster service worker which is the swearing in process, then they are covered under the county's workmen's comp plan.

>> JUNE KAILES: But the question is about ILC people who are FAST members.

>> Well, then, they would be sworn into their local county and they would be covered by there county as a DSW.

>> JUNE KAILES: And that seems to be a problem.

>> Why?

>> CHRISTINA MILLS: Yeah. That is what I am wondering too. I didn't have an answer to that question. This is Christina. Because there is a formal swearing in is why there's not a problem in becoming insured under the program in Alameda County. And Sheri, I think were you ‑‑ I know you first came in through Alameda County. But do we have anybody who is not a county employee who is a part of FAST that has had this county insurance issue that could speak to it?

>> SHERI BURNS: This is Sheri. I don't recall any of our folks going through a swearing in process to make sure they were covered under the county's worker's compensation insurance.

That may have happened back in 2007 or 2008. I don't recall that happening in Alameda County. And I don't believe the folks here in San José either went through that process. But I will check on that. Regardless, we have our own liability and worker's compensation insurance. We understand and take that responsibility on as an inspect living center in support of our county and in support of our community. So, I think it's a good question that needs to be resolved. But it should not be the reason that folks from other community‑based organizations, including centers for independent living, are not part of the priority group of folks that are deployed for FAST.

>> JUNE KAILES: Sheri, I think your point is very important. That you do as a community‑based organization have your own coverage for people who do deploy. Mike, any ‑‑

>> There's also the issue of payment to who is paying the workers. Typically the employer is responsible for paying their employees who are dispatched. Then they can submit ‑‑ there's a process to submit a bill if it is declared a state of emergency, et cetera. I don't know the nuances of that. That's where the COAD and the VOAD are really helpful in helping people understand those processes.

>> SHERI BURNS: This is Sheri again. Mike is absolutely right. During the 2017 floods in the neighborhoods from the Anderson dam that overflowed, we did respond to that and we kept track of our time, our staffing time and any expenses and we submitted those to the city of San José because it was declared disaster. So, that was not a problem at all. But again, it is because CADRE was deployed and FAST was deployed locally. However, the recent fires, there was no request for deployment. We self‑deployed and as a courtesy under the request from the office of Access and Functional Needs to the Santa Cruz county area. And I took that responsibility on and those costs.

>> That is often ‑‑ I think this is an issue that really needs to be focused on. If we are going to get people participating from the community, I would suggest that ‑‑ and I think it is an important issue. One of the things we have done is we have asked the non‑do it people to sign up with Red Cross as a mechanism to be able to get them through the Red Cross process because obviously, Red Cross is going to be at the shelters. So, just as a work‑around that is a method you all should consider. But it is an issue that needs to get ironed out so they can become part of the kind of FAST promotion and a clear understanding up front. So, anyways, I think we should send that item somewhere up to the state. But I think it is going to involve several people. Probably including attorneys. Who knows.

>> JUNE KAILES: I agree with that, Mike. I see Vincent Fong on the list here and he is going to be presenting ‑‑ one of the presenters next month. So, I think that is definitely ‑‑ we're going to pin that on his list as well to do a deeper dive on. Because I remember this issue going all the way back to 2007. And Sheri's point about individual coverage from the CBO is important and it might be part of the solution. But I don't know. We will have to probe that a lot further next month as well.

>> The other thing to put on his list for next month is the mutual aid process. From county to county. Not from the state. But from county to county.

>> JUNE KAILES: So, just to be clear Mike, do you mean mutual in terms of like ‑‑

>> FAST.

>> JUNE KAILES: Like can I borrow the FAST from Orange County or from San Bernardino to come out in L.A.?

>> There's a very, very specific process and it is not clearly under.

>> JUNE KAILES: Right.

>> RON HALOG: June, this is Ron. You know, I would like to see ‑‑ when I was an executive director for A La Costa, FAST was rolling out and I remember Sandi coming to me and asking me about it. One of my biggest concerns was about the liability and who was going to be paying for the staff. Where was it going to be coming from. When I heard about the swearing in, I kind of went oh. I think there should be a cleaner blueprint for organizations so they really know what entails, what does it mean. It is like, yeah, I have to get permission from my supervisor in order to be deployed. But how ‑‑ I just think the executive director or the people need to understand this is how it is going to impact your organization. But it is also going to be impacting the whole community. How does it all fit in? What is my liability? Who is paying for it? All that information should be listed out. I thought at one point there was something that was given to organizations. That was a while ago though.

>> JUNE KAILES: There was a bill ‑‑ some legislation that addressed this.

>> SHERI BURNS: Also, June, Dana just put in with Santa Clara County put in the chat all the folks in Santa Clara County initially that had gone through the certification training were sworn in as disaster workers. Thank you, Dana.

>> JUNE KAILES: One of the things I learned as a FAST train in all counties is different. They can't dictate. What L.A. County chooses to do may be very different from what Sonoma County does. Vidal has a comment.

>> JUNE KAILES: Go ahead.

>> Our service area is five counties. So, we are working with five counties with anything that we do as an ILC. We have satellite offices in Merced staffed by one person. Satellite office in Visalia staffed with one person. Those are enormous counties population wise. But also how we ‑‑ how they react to involvement from CBOs really is different based on CBO. Now, in Fresno County we have a real good relationship with our ADA coordinator with the city of Fresno. She has helped us get leads into emergency preparedness. We have been identified with help from CFILC as well for the fires for responding to those fires. So, as an agency, we're doing a lot. But I like the FAST track idea. One of the concerns is how are the counties going to see such a team or program? Because in the past, I have been exposed to a lot of counties and municipalities that have said well, it looks like a duplication of services and we have approached them only as an ILC. But now, things are a little bit different. They are not seen that way where concise with the services that our independent living center can do for them. And we're just talking about emergency preparedness. But a lot of them are picking and choosing who they're going to let at the table because a lot of them believe they have paid staff ‑‑ that is a liability issue. Paid staff that can address those issues. A lot of them are using the ADA coordinators or persons that are assigned that position that aren't technical ADA coordinators. We happen to have a very good ADA coordinators with a lot of education and experience. So, she's been good to kind of present us as a go‑to agency for some of the things that you folks have talked about with people with disabilities and some of our concerns. So, that's kind of what I wanted to add to that because everyone is ‑‑ actually it is the old adage you are speaking to the choir. Because I have been involved with these five counties and it has been difficult sometimes to even get your foot in the door. And we need the insight folks. But we also need the structure of what we're talking about and how well it works in other counties and I'm glad for that. I'm hearing that today. And I can see that it does work. But this is five counties and it is a new dynamic for just getting thrown in there. Thank you for your ‑‑ allowing me to speak. Over.

>> JUNE KAILES: Okay. Thanks. I don't see any other hands raised in the participant list. We only have about three minutes left. So, just a reminder to please click on the link in the chat, the beginning of the chat and give us some feedback about this call. And also, please put in your ‑‑ on your calendar the call for next month. And send ‑‑ send me any questions you have that you would like to make sure we forward on to the state for next month. And let's see? What else? Some of you asked me about a recurring invite for these meetings. Christina sent out the schedule earlier this morning. If you didn't get it, just let Christina know. We're not doing recurring calendar invites anymore because frankly, it got to be a bit of a nightmare when people tried to correct things or people were using different kinds of calendars. So, we leave that up to you to put the reoccurring invite into your own calendar. So, that is why we're not doing that anymore. But thank y'all for your robust discussion and for our panelists for not only a meaty list of things to do.

But for your preparation time. And we look forward to part two next month. And thank y'all very much. So, with that, we will sign off with one minute left.

>> Thank you.

[Event concluded]