

Resources for Disasters and Disability Directory for Individuals with Disabilities and their Families Experiencing the Effects of Hurricane Harvey

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The **RE**sources for **Di**sasters and **Di**sability (REDDy) Directory is a dynamic online disaster recovery directory addressing the resources and support needs of individuals with disabilities effected by Hurricane Harvey. The primary aim of the REDDy Directory is to provide case managers (who often have limited knowledge of disability-related needs) with up-to-date information and contact information on disability-related resources available throughout Texas. In addition, the REDDy Directory is assigned to assist long term recovery committees, disability-related organizations, disaster-related organizations, and individuals with disabilities in locating resources and services provided to Hurricane Harvey survivors. REDDy (in the beta phase) is an online searchable guide of disability-related resources, services, and information designed for individuals to search by zip code, key word (e.g. durable medical equipment), or resource type (e.g. Health and Medical Services).

From September 11th, 2017 to December 4th, 2017, the REDDy Directory was created and supported by the Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University and the Texas Center for Disability Studies at the University of Texas. During this time frame, a beta verion of the REDDy Directory was formed, resource/services were sought out and added to the directory, and directory materials were created and disseminated to disability-related organizations, disaster-relief organizations, and other organizations assisting in disaster recovery.

Creating the REDDy Directory

In the beginning stages of creating the REDDy Directory, approximately 1,956 organizations in the Directory of Community Resources (DCR) (a part of Project REDD with the Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University) were contacted by email or phone and asked to update their information. If the organization was providing resources or services for individuals with disabilities affected by Hurricane Harvey, they were asked to add that information to their listing.

Two criteria had to be met for a resource to be added to the REDDy Directory: a) provided resources or services for individuals with disabilities, b) resources or services were provided for victims of Hurricane Harvey. In addition to contacting existing listings in the DCR, resources were searched via the Internet and organizations called to find out if they provided disaster-related services or resources. Phone calls were made between September to November to find the most direct source of information an individual could use to contact these organizations for resources or services.

The REDDy Directory webpage was updated for easy search options to locate resources within the directory. For example, a section was added for “Harvey Resources and Services descriptions.” This provided organizations with a space to add more specific information about the resources they provided. A space was created for adding website links and search functions were created for ease of use. The Texas Information Referral Network 2-1-1 was added as a link within the directory.

As the effects of Hurricane Harvey stretched far and wide throughout Texas, individual county and city webpages were checked for resources and services to add to the REDDy Directory. Resources in rural areas were cross checked with maps. If an organization had multiple centers/locations providing resources, such as Catholic Charities, then individual locations in the disaster affected areas were contacted. Additional organizations were added to the directory upon discovery or by suggestion via email or phone. Between September to October, organizations providing resources and services were contacted on a weekly to biweekly basis to update their information; monthly thereafter.

While vetting resources and services meeting the REDDy Directory criteria, much information was found that were appropriate for anyone impacted by Hurricane Harvey, typically on county, city, and disaster relief websites. A quick link was placed in the REDDy Directory link to an external page on the Project REDD website. Approximately 100 website links and resource guides on this external page were added from September 11th through December 4th on this Project REDD webpage. These website links were checked monthly to ensure Hurricane Harvey information was up to date.

Reminder emails were sent to 98 REDDy Directory resources/services requesting updates in November. Updating resources included changing a type of service or removing a resource from the directory when the resource/service was longer available. Ensuring the REDDy Directory was updated was essential in aiding individuals with disabilities searching for resources. Organizations continue to be reviewed to ensure they currently providing resources for individuals with disabilities affected by Hurricane Harvey. Once a resource or service was no longer being provided for Hurricane Harvey victims, it was deleted from the REDDy Directory.

Disseminating the REDDy Directory

Two objectives of the REDDy Directory were to a) provide the REDDy Directory information for people with disabilities and their families who are searching on their own for such resources; and b) to increase knowledge that disability-related organizations have about organizations providing disaster-related resources. Once the beta REDDy Directory contained 50 resources/service entries, on October 6th, emails were sent to disaster recovery organizations and disability-related organizations such as the Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOADs) (87 emails), Disability Task Force (73 emails), Golden Triangle Task Force (25 emails), Emergency Management (272 emails), and long-term recovery committees (30 emails). Facebook was used to contact 70 emergency management offices and the REDDy Directory was sent out through the Texas Governor’s Office on Disability listserv. VOADs, Disability Task

Force, and the Golden Triangle Task Force were emailed again (185 emails) in November about the REDDy Directory.

Dissemination materials were created with the REDDy Directory website information. Materials included rulers with the REDDy Directory website information and emergency preparedness tips. Emails and letters were sent to organizations, encouraging visiting the REDDy Directory website and to email the REDDy Directory staff with suggestions of known resources/services. Dissemination materials were mailed to: 60 Emergency Management Centers within the affected counties, 37 County Offices of Emergency Management, and 64 Texas VOAD organizations. Thirty-eight resources from the REDDy Directory were mailed dissemination materials to be handed out at their facilities (e.g. food pantries). Letters were drafted to send to Long-Term Recovery Committees. Five FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers were visited and given dissemination materials. As many FEMA workers came out of state, the REDDy Directory provided essential information about disability-related information.

Future Development and Evaluation

The REDDy Directory, was created as a tool for case managers, families and individuals with disabilities, and other entities helping individuals with disabilities who were impacted by Hurricane Harvey. The REDDy Directory will serve as a model for future disaster purposes. The directory was designed so that it may be used as a template for future disasters using Drupal.

There is cross-over between disability-related and other types of supports and services offered to hurricane survivors. Resources/services specific for individuals with disabilities included services such as: durable medical equipment (e.g. walkers, canes, wheelchairs, etc.), medical supplies, hearing aids, hearing aid batteries, and educational supports. Other types of disaster relief resources/services included: mental health resources, counseling, Internet or phone health consultations, debris clean-up, housing repair, FEMA application assistance, clothing, food, furniture, financial assistance, legal advice, career advising, etc. Organizations may have provided multiple resources/services (e.g. durable medical equipment and financial assistance).

What we learned from this process is that disaster-related organizations almost never add their own information post-disaster to databases of this type. As a result, REDDy Directory staff were responsible for seeking out and inputting resources. In addition, to have up-to-date information, emails and phone calls to disaster and disability-related organizations occurred frequently to accurately update the REDDy Directory post-disaster. An estimate 8 hours per week were necessary simply to keep the database updated once it was created.

Services and Resources Included in the REDDy Directory

Approximately, 141 entries were in the REDDy Directory throughout September 11th to December 4th, 2017. Entries added and removed between September 11th and December 4th included: Airbnb, Age of Central Texas, American Diabetes Association, American Red Cross Immediate Assistance, Autism Society of Texas, Beaumont's First Baptist Church, Centers for Medicaid/Medicare, Cleanup Assistance (was renamed to) Texas Long-Term Recovery, DaVita, Disaster Case Management Hotline, Disaster Clean-up Assistance, Disaster Survivors and Disabilities Hotline (Portlight), Easter Seals, Getting Sorted, Grand Prairie ISD, Hope for Three, Health Equipment Lending Program, Houston Church Planting Network, Hurricane Harvey Long-Term Recovery Hotline, Lilly, Live Health Online, Next Step Academy, Nu Motion, Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies, Rehabilitation Services Volunteer Project (RSVP) Texas, Spina Bifida Association of North Texas, St. John's Church Downtown, Sugar Land Texas Dialysis Centers Disaster Response Team, Texas ABA, Travis Medical, U.S. Society for ACC, VSP Mobile Clinic, and YMCA of Austin.

The following 103 entries were added to the REDDy Directory and remained as of December 4th: ACC Relief: Hurricane Harvey, Administration for Children and Families, AIDS Foundation Houston, All Hands and Hearts, American Council of the Blind, American Diabetes Association -Legal Assistance, American Red Cross Texas Gulf Coast Region, Amerigroup, Aransas County Volunteer Reception Center-First Baptist Church of Rockport, Attitudes and Attire®, Austin Disaster Relief Network, Autism Speaks, Avenue Housing Recovery Services, Bastrop County Long Term Recovery Team, Be An Angel, Brazoria County Dream Center, Catholic Charities Central Texas, Catholic Charities of Corpus Christi, Inc., Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, Coastal Bend Center for Independent Living, Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas, Counseling Institute of Texas, County of Galveston, Crisis Assistance Center, D&S Community Services, Dallas Hearing Foundation, Disability Rights Texas, Easter Seals Greater Houston Central Office, Education Service Center Region 2, Education Service Center Region 3, Education Service Center Region 4, Education Service Center Region 5, Emergency Aid Coalition, Epilepsy Foundation of Texas, Epilepsy Foundation Central and South Texas, Family Endeavors, Inc., Family Houston, Family Service Center of Galveston County, Family to Family Network, FEMA Disaster Assistance, FEMA Transitional Sheltering Assistance, Garro Behavior Consulting, Give an Hour, Greater Houston Autism Coalition, Habitat for Humanity Northwest Harris County, H.I.S. Ministries, Houston Center for Independent Living – The Coalition for Barrier Free Living, Inc., Hope Coalition America, Houston Community College – VAST Academy, Houston Food Bank, Houston Furniture Bank, Houston Medical Wellness Clinic, Houston Special Needs Help Program (part of Next Step Academy), Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU) at TIRR Memorial Hermann, Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston, Katy Christian Ministries (KCM), Krist Samaritan Counseling Center, Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH), Memorial Assistance Ministries (MAM), Mennonite Disaster Service, Mental Health America of Greater Houston, NAMI Greater Houston, National ARD/IEP Advocates, National Foundation of the Blind of Texas, Northwest Assistance Ministries, Partners Resource Network TEAM Project, Partners Resource Network-Path Project,

Pass It On, Portlight Inclusive Disaster Strategies, Project Mend, Protect TX Fragile Kids (PTFK), Quantum Rehab/Pride Mobility Products, Rebuilding Together Houston, Register for FEMA ASL Video, Rent Café, Rise Center for Independent Living-Beaumont, SBP, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Society of St. Vincent de Paul Galveston-Houston, Spina Bifida Association of North Texas, St. John Vianney Catholic Church, Talking Books – Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Team Rubicon, Texans for Special Education Reform, Texas Association for Behavior Analysis (TxABA), Texas Baptist Men, Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities, Texas Diaper Bank, Texas Education Agency (TEA), Texas Education Agency Hurricane Harvey: Mental Health Resources, Texas Information Referral Network 2-1-1, Texas Psychological Association, Texas Ramp Project, Texas School for the Deaf – Education Resource Center on Deafness (ERCOD), Texas Workforce Solutions – Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS), The Health Center at the Coastal Bend Wellness Foundation, The Montrose Center, The National Association of Free and Charitable Clinics, United Health Care – Optum, United Spinal Association, United Spinal Association of Houston, Wesley Community Center, and West Houston Assistance Ministries.

REDDy (REsources for Disaster and Disability) Directory
Texas A&M University
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Project Goal: To provide an online searchable resource guide to disability-related resources, organizations, and supplies for those affected by the disaster.

Objectives	Dates Completed	Impact
#1- Provide case managers (who often have limited knowledge of disability-related needs) with up-to-date information and contact information on disability-related resources available throughout Texas.	9/11 -11/30/2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails about the REDDy Directory sent to disaster organizations and disability-related organizations such as Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOADs) (87 emails), Disability Task Force (73 emails), Golden Triangle Task Force (25 emails), emergency management offices (272 emails), and long-term recovery committees (30 emails). • Dissemination materials were mailed to 60 Emergency Management Centers within the affected counties and 64 VOAD organizations. • Five FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers were visited and given dissemination materials.
#2- Provide information for people with disabilities and their families who are searching on their own for such resources.	9/11-12/4/2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 1,956 organizations in the Directory of Community Resources were contacted by email or phone and asked to update their information. The organizations could also disseminate information about the REDDy Directory. • REDDy Directory information disseminated allowed people with disabilities and their families to learn about the REDDy Directory. • Thirty-eight organizations in the REDDy Directory received materials to disseminate at their facilities (e.g. food pantries). • 141 entries were included in the REDDy Directory throughout September 11th to December 4th, 2017.
#3- Increase knowledge that disability-related organizations have about organizations providing disaster-related resources.	9/11-11/30/2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook used to contact 70 emergency management offices. • Emails sent to 98 REDDy Directory resources/services requesting updates of their resources.
#4- Test this resource directory model for future disaster purposes.	9/11-12/4/2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The REDDy Directory template continually updated for Hurricane Harvey specific needs. Search functions and additional links modified. • Note-keeping and reflections kept on how to improve model for future disaster purposes.