

# FEMA and the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers Talk Disaster Preparedness for Caregivers: Webinar Resources and Q&As

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In this webinar, FEMA and the [Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers \(RCI\)](#) provided caregivers with key considerations and resources for preparing themselves and their care recipients for a disaster. This document includes resources and responses to questions from the webinar.

## Resources

- [FEMA's Ready Campaign](#) educates and empowers people to prepare for, respond to, and mitigate emergencies and disasters. Resources include:
  - [Disaster Preparedness Kit](#)
  - [Resources for Older Adults](#)
  - [Emergency Alerts Information](#)
  - [FEMA App](#)
  - [Make a Plan Form](#)
  - [Low and No Cost Preparedness Resources](#)
- [Disaster Preparedness Guide for Older Adults](#) supports older adults and their caregivers in preparing for emergencies and provides easy-to-read, user-friendly worksheets to create disaster preparedness plans.
- [Prepared Caregivers: Toolkit for Caregivers of Veterans for Disaster Preparedness](#) consists of plans, insight, and conversation prompts for caregivers of Veterans, with checklists to create a plan suited to caregivers' unique needs.
- [Aging and Disability Resource Centers](#) assists older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers in making informed decisions about their long-term care needs and supports and helps people access public and private programs.



# FEMA

- [National Association for Area Agencies on Aging](#) helps older adults and people with disabilities live with optimal health, well-being, independence, and dignity in their homes and communities.
- [Smart911](#) and [RapidSOS Home](#) create profiles to help first responders learn about care recipients' needs.
- [Healthcare Ready's A Review of State Emergency Prescription Protocols](#) and [CDC's A Prescription for Preparedness](#) summarize state laws for filling prescriptions before a disaster or emergency.
- [Healthcare Ready's Rx on the Run](#) creates a personalized wallet card with prescriptions and medical needs.
- [Rx Open](#) provides information on the operating status of healthcare facilities in areas impacted by a disaster.
- [Emergency Prescription Assistance Program](#) helps people in a federally identified disaster area who do not have health insurance to access prescription drugs, vaccinations, medical supplies, and equipment.
- **Crisis Text Line** if you need free mental health support, text TOUGH to 741741, 24/7.

## Questions and Answers

### How can caregivers work with first responders to meet their care recipients' needs?

You can create a profile that can help first responders learn about the needs of your care recipient using [Smart911](#) or [RapidSOS Home](#). You can also create a hard copy needs list in your disaster preparedness kit.

Caregivers can call or visit their local emergency management offices to connect with emergency management professionals and learn more about local emergency processes. In some cases, caregivers and their care recipients may arrange a tour of the local disaster shelter for their emergency sheltering plans.

### What should caregivers do if their care recipient relies on electricity for their medical devices?

If your care recipient relies on electricity for medical devices, assistive technology, or to maintain health and independence, your electricity supplier may have programs or resources to help. Ask your supplier how to get on a priority restoration list or if they can provide battery backups to individuals with a qualifying need and diagnosis. When you start to make your plan, identify people in your support network who may be outside the affected area if there is a loss of electricity, and you need to evacuate.

If there is electricity during an event, keep the medical device fully charged for as long as possible.

### How can long distance caregivers or caregivers planning to be out of the home prepare their care recipients for emergencies?

Long distance caregivers can sign up to receive [emergency alerts](#) for their care recipients' zip codes, updates from the county or emergency management department's communication system, and power outage updates for the power company of the care recipient. They are also encouraged to make connections with neighbors or someone else who lives near the care recipient, so this contact can check-in periodically.

All caregivers can help their care recipients to make emergency plans that consider their specific needs, available resources, and support networks.

### **How do we support non-English speaking care recipients and caregivers during an emergency?**

As a caregiver, you should consider making a plan to address the language needs of your care recipient. Begin by asking the following questions:

- Does my care recipient use assistive devices, interpreters for communication, or speak a language not common in the community?
- Is my support network familiar with the needs of my care recipient and prepared to address them?

Preparedness information, including from [FEMA's Ready Campaign](#), is available in Spanish and many other languages. The [Disaster Preparedness Guide for Older Adults](#) is available in English and Spanish.

### **How can we address a care recipients' anxiety, panic, or fear before, during, or after an emergency?**

One of the best ways to reduce anxiety about disasters is to have an individualized plan in place that you are confident implementing. Planning for a disaster or emergency can seem overwhelming, but it can be completed in three steps:

1. Identify you and your care recipients' barriers, such as mobility issues, limited resources, and medical needs, as well as strategies to overcome them.
2. Learn about emergency services partners and community resources and connect your care recipient and your support network to them.
3. [Make a plan](#), including building a [disaster preparedness kit](#).

You may include comfort items in the disaster preparedness kits, such as stuffed animals, fidget toys, weighted blankets, and noise-canceling devices, that will soothe and calm your care recipient. It is important to include your care recipient in disaster planning to ensure their needs are met.

While making an emergency sheltering plan, it will be helpful to know what to expect at an emergency shelter to help you develop a plan that meets the unique needs of your care recipient.

- Discuss with your care recipient any accommodations that could make the sheltering experience more comfortable. Share these with shelter authorities if possible.
- Schedule a meeting with your local emergency management office to determine the locations of your designated congregate shelter and possibly arrange a tour with your care recipient.

Review [FEMA's Ready Campaign](#) for more guidance and resources.

## How can caregivers and care recipients prepare for their medication needs before a disaster?

Medication needs and prescription refill processes will vary, but there are program and resources available. Learn about programs and resources before you need them; talk to your care recipient's doctor and support network.

- Each state has different laws that authorize pharmacies and pharmacists to refill prescriptions early in the event of a declared emergency. Familiarize yourself with the laws in your state by visiting: [Healthcare Ready's A Review of State Emergency Prescription Protocols](#) and [CDC's A Prescription for Preparedness](#).
- Locate an open pharmacy or healthcare facility during and after a disaster. Healthcare Ready's [Rx Open](#) provides information on the operating status of healthcare facilities in areas impacted by a disaster.
- [Emergency Prescription Assistance Program](#) helps people in a federally identified disaster area who do not have health insurance access prescription drugs, vaccinations, medical supplies, and equipment.

Additionally, caregivers should review their care recipients' medical needs and answer:

- Do you have the money to cover expenses such as relocation, extra medications, or other associated costs you may encounter in a disaster?
- Do I or members of my support team have a full understanding of the medication and equipment needs of the person I am taking care of?
- What medications or assistive devices enable my care recipient to function independently? Does my support network know how to use this technology or administer these medications?

Caregivers should include medication and medical related items in the disaster preparedness kit such as:

- Complete list of medications and specialty pharmacies. Make a personalized wallet card documenting prescriptions and medical information through [Healthcare Ready's Rx on the Run](#).
- Cooler and ice packs to keep refrigerated medications cool.
- Medical supplies, assistive devices, and mobility aids.

## How do we help people living with low incomes make preparedness a priority when time and resources are a concern?

Disaster preparedness is important for everyone, regardless of their income, but it is not without unique challenges for some people. Taking time to prepare now can help save thousands of dollars and provide peace of mind when the next disaster or emergency occurs. Review and use [FEMA's Low and No Cost Preparedness resources](#) and the strategies in the [Disaster Preparedness Guide for Older Adults](#).