

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 215

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 12, 2021

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE

District 37 (Bergen)

Assemblywoman AURA K. DUNN

District 25 (Morris and Somerset)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Benson

SYNOPSIS

Urges Office of Emergency Management to address needs of people with disabilities before, during and after emergency or disaster.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/29/2021)

1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** urging the Office of Emergency
2 Management to address the access and functional needs of
3 people with disabilities before, during and after emergencies and
4 disasters.
5
6 **WHEREAS**, The inability to meet the access and functional needs of
7 people with disabilities in a timely and appropriate manner during
8 or after an emergency or disaster situation may result in severe or
9 potentially life-threatening consequences; and
10 **WHEREAS**, The current COVID-19 pandemic has created a global
11 health emergency which has had, and continues to have, far
12 reaching effects on the people of the State of New Jersey; and
13 **WHEREAS**, The present global health emergency has brought attention
14 to some of the difficulties that people with disabilities may face
15 during an emergency or disaster situation; and
16 **WHEREAS**, The COVID-19 emergency has demonstrated that people
17 with disabilities are often disproportionately and more negatively
18 impacted by such an emergency or disaster situation; and
19 **WHEREAS**, It is critically important to make information related to an
20 emergency or disaster situation readily accessible to all people in
21 the State, including those with vision or hearing impairments and
22 those with developmental disabilities, so that all people may be
23 informed and take appropriate safeguards in the event of event of an
24 emergency, such as the present COVID-19 health crisis; and
25 **WHEREAS**, Dissemination of information related to such an emergency
26 or disaster only through traditional means makes important
27 information inaccessible for some people with disabilities, and,
28 therefore, may put persons with disabilities at a greater risk for
29 harm; and
30 **WHEREAS**, The present state of emergency created by the corona virus
31 pandemic has impacted the ability of many people with disabilities
32 to access transportation which in turn impacts the person's ability to
33 obtain medical treatment and groceries, as well as the ability to get
34 to places of employment and engage in other essential daily life
35 activities; and
36 **WHEREAS**, The ongoing pandemic has placed an additional burden on
37 entities and individuals who provide care and assistance to persons
38 with disabilities such as group care facilities and private caregivers;
39 and
40 **WHEREAS**, The Office of Emergency Management is responsible for
41 coordinating damage and needs assessments related and in response
42 to expected and actual emergency situations; and
43 **WHEREAS**, In order to manage emergency and disaster relief efforts in
44 the State of New Jersey, the Office of Emergency Management
45 should be aware of the needs of all persons living within the State,
46 including those with disabilities; and
47 **WHEREAS**, Having knowledge of the needs of people with disabilities
48 before, during and after the occurrence of an emergency or disaster

1 situation will provide better opportunity for the Office of
2 Emergency Management to coordinate an appropriate response to
3 meet such needs in the event of a future emergency or disaster;
4 now, therefore,
5

6 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the General Assembly of the State of New
7 Jersey:
8

9 1. The General Assembly of the State of New Jersey urges the
10 Office of Emergency Management to address the access and
11 functional needs of persons with disabilities before, during, and
12 after an emergency or disaster situation in order to ensure that the
13 needs of all residents within the State are appropriately responded
14 to in the event of an emergency or disaster
15 .

16 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
17 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the
18 Governor of the State of New Jersey, and the Director of the Office
19 of Emergency Management.
20

21
22 STATEMENT
23

24 This resolution urges the Office of Emergency Management to
25 address the access and functional needs of people with disabilities
26 before, during and after an emergency or disaster situation in order
27 to appropriately manage the State's emergency and disaster
28 responses for all New Jersey residents. As the COVID-19
29 emergency has demonstrated, people with disabilities are often
30 disproportionately and negatively impacted during an emergency
31 situation due to increased obstacles in meeting certain access and
32 functional needs resulting from this public health emergency. If
33 these needs are not met with a timely and appropriate response in
34 such a situation, persons with disabilities may become unable to
35 meet basic needs and become faced with dire consequences.

36 Because it is the Office of Emergency Management's
37 responsibility to direct and coordinate emergency management
38 activities within the State for all persons living in New Jersey, this
39 resolution urges the Office of Emergency Management to address
40 the access and functional needs of people who have disabilities in
41 the event of an emergency or disaster in order to better meet these
42 needs in the future.