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Access and Functional Needs Families-From Whom do They Want to Hear Disaster Preparedness Information?

In Florida, the percentage of adults (over 18 years old) with a disability is 13.5%, while children (age 18 and under) is 6.7%. (Government U. S., 2021) Adults are expected as caregivers to provide the necessary safety and physiological needs (as per Maslow). Disaster preparedness of families and individuals has long been emphasized when looking at ways communities can help better respond to and recover from disaster. However, only 45% of households are prepared for a disaster, per the 2022 National Household Survey. (FEMA, Results from the 2022 National Household Survey on Disaster Preparedness, 2022)

The data from the National Household Survey also shows that families with access and functional needs need to be prepared more than the general population. This data has been supported by recent research completed by Wolf-Fordham et al. (2015), Chin et al. (2020) and many others. Understanding how families are prepared and how to help them will only help emergency management agencies. Krueger et al. (2020) noted, “These insights may help communities better target investments to improve readiness and resilience” (p. 449). The research will focus on access and

functional needs/special needs families and the presentation of disaster preparedness information to these families. Previous research has been conducted on the level of preparedness of these families or the benefits of providing preparedness equipment to their preparedness. However, the question of whom the families want to receive this information from has not been answered. This current research aims to inform disaster professionals better about whom these families will willingly receive preparedness information. The study is a mixed methods survey of a convenience sample of those access and functional needs families in Florida. The goal is to help those in emergency management better understand how to help these families prepare for a disaster.

Presentation Theme: Findings from a mixed methods survey will address access and functional needs of families' disaster preparedness and from whom they want to receive information on how to prepare.

Collaborators, Advisor(s) and Department(s) that assisted with this research: Dr. Jane Kushma (Chair of the Dissertation committee, Jacksonville State University), Dr. Bill Lowe and Dr. Chongming Wang (Dissertation Committee, Jacksonville State University)