

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

Reviewing Best Practices and Exploring the Creation of a Comprehensive Emergency Registry System for Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities in Los Angeles County

Los Angeles County (County) is home to one of the largest populations of older adults and persons with disabilities in the nation. According to the California Department of Finance's Demographic Research Unit, the County's population aged 60 and older is projected to grow substantially in the coming decades. In 2020, this demographic comprised approximately 2 million residents. By 2030, it is expected to reach nearly 2.5 million, accounting for about 26% of the County's population. Looking further ahead, projections indicate that by 2060, the number of residents aged 60 and older will approach 3 million, representing approximately 35% of the total population. Additionally, the 2021 American Community Survey reports that approximately 1,004,632 individuals in the County have a disability, making up about 10.1% of the County's population.

The Aging and Disabilities Department (AD) has conducted ongoing work with LA Found, to help improve the process for families and caregivers to identify and find wandering individuals who have a diagnosis of Alzheimer's, dementia, autism, or other cognitive impairments. This program has provided the County with many lessons learned on how social services and emergency coordination with law enforcement could work. The recent fires in Los Angeles have highlighted and elevated the critical need for more targeted responses to meet the needs of older

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adults and individuals with disabilities. Many of these individuals may face heightened risks during emergencies and disasters due to mobility challenges, medical needs, communication barriers, or other access and functional needs. Several states and local jurisdictions have explored or implemented volunteer disaster registries to enhance preparedness and response efforts for vulnerable populations such as older adults and people with disabilities. Such a registry can play a vital role in ensuring these populations are adequately supported during emergencies. In fact, during the Board of Supervisors' meeting on January 21, 2025, the Board discussed with the Fire Chief and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) the feasibility of developing a database of residents with limited mobility or disabilities to aid in emergency evacuations.

Ensuring the safety and well-being of vulnerable populations during emergencies is a critical responsibility of the County. Although the CEO indicated she would report back on the registry during the Board's meeting on January 21, a focused, Board-directed study is needed to ensure the County explores and reviews best practices to assist older adults and people with disabilities prior to a disaster. An emergency registry system could be a one such vehicle that serves as a vital tool for emergency responders and County agencies. Establishing such a system requires a review of best practices, careful evaluation of technological infrastructure, logistical feasibility, data privacy considerations, and financial implications.

A feasibility study that examines best practices and explores the possibility of developing a registry, assesses the potential benefits, challenges, and costs, as well as determines the most effective framework for implementation is needed. This study should evaluate whether a registry

could assist in emergency preparedness, ongoing work with LA Found, public health outreach, and resource allocation while protecting privacy and respecting individual autonomy. Additionally, it should explore partnerships with County departments, State, and community organizations to ensure that the feasibility study and its recommendations are inclusive, user-friendly, and equitable.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors Direct the Director of the Aging & Disabilities Department in collaboration with Chief Executive Office (CEO), Office of Emergency Management (OEM), the LA County Fire Chief, and the Sheriff, and in consultation with the Directors of: Department of Public Health, Department of Children and Family Services, Department of Public Social Services, Department of Health Services, Quality and Productivity Commission, the Center for Strategic Partnerships, other relevant County departments, and the Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities and the Los Angeles County Commission for Older Adults, to conduct an unbiased feasibility study using existing departmental resources, subject matter experts and stakeholders to report back with a written report within 120 days on the following:

1. Use the whole community planning and inclusive planning principles to engage community-based stakeholder groups to understand the needs of the community around evacuations, which includes understanding their perspectives and drawing from their lived experiences;
2. Outreach to agencies that currently have an established registry to understand purpose,

scope, and functionality of the registry, including establishment, activation, emergency response coordination, resource allocation, and service delivery;

3. Understand legal, technological, privacy considerations of existing registries and methodology used to ensure data is current, representative and usable;
4. Review lessons learned from past implementation of registries by other agencies and develop recommendations of how these registries could be potentially used in the County, which includes highlighting both strengths and weaknesses of these recommendations;
5. Determine how existing registries managed by county departments could be cohesively used during an emergency;
6. Coordinate with the State Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN) to explore other non-registry-based solutions with stakeholders, to support evacuation of those with access and functional needs, which includes developing a list of solutions, and a list of advantages and disadvantages of each; and
7. Identify estimated costs, potential funding opportunities including but not limited to philanthropic and grant funding, resources, implementation barriers and timelines to implement any resulting recommendations from the feasibility study.

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