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## **IEMA Highlights Preparedness for the Whole Community in April**

### ***Encourages families, businesses, schools and other organizations to develop emergency plans that address all needs***

SPRINGFIELD – In the past 12 months, Illinois residents have endured flooding, tornadoes, snow storms, a Polar Vortex and other public safety emergencies. While these and other disasters can't be prevented, their impact can be reduced when people, businesses, schools and others in a community are properly prepared.

With that in mind, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) will focus on 'Preparedness for the Whole Community' throughout April as part of its 2014 preparedness campaign.

"Whole community means everyone in a community needs to be prepared for disasters, not just emergency response agencies" said IEMA Director Jonathon Monken. "Individuals, families, businesses, schools, faith-based groups and other community organizations should develop and practice emergency plans that address the needs of everyone in our community. This should include senior citizens, children, those with health concerns or disabilities, non-English speaking residents and others."

The state of Illinois has several resources available to assist with whole community preparedness, including an upcoming webinar, a preparedness guidebook for people with functional needs, American Sign Language (ASL) videos, information available in six non-English languages and links to information available from other organizations.

In addition, the Ready Illinois website ([www.Ready.Illinois.gov](http://www.Ready.Illinois.gov)) offers a guidebook, *Emergency Preparedness Tips for Those with Functional Needs*, with preparedness tips for people with visual, cognitive or mobility impairments; people who are deaf or hard of hearing; those who utilize service animals or life support systems; and senior citizens.

For each functional need, the guidebook provides a list of supplemental items for a disaster kit, tips on developing an emergency plan, suggestions on how to be better informed about community emergency planning and a checklist of preparedness activities.

The Illinois Department on Aging provides preparedness information specific to senior citizens on its website at [http://aoa.gov/AoARoot/Preparedness/Resources\\_Individuals/index.aspx](http://aoa.gov/AoARoot/Preparedness/Resources_Individuals/index.aspx) and on the Ready Illinois website.

The Ready Illinois website also offers more than two dozen emergency preparedness videos produced in American Sign Language with closed captioning. A function on the website also enables most preparedness information to be translated into Spanish, Polish, Chinese, Italian, German and Filipino.