One of CIEP’s founders, Todd Holloway, is a Senior Independent Living Advocate for the Center for Independence (CFI), a center for independent living (CIL) in Lakewood (Pierce County), Washington. He works at the local, state, federal, and international levels on Inclusive Emergency Management. Prior to his 10 plus years at CFI, he worked in hospitals doing biomedical photography and videography. He was the media specialist in the education department at Good Samaritan Hospital, where he met the staff and the first director of CFI which was then located on the campus of Good Samaritan. He has never been more comfortable in any position than the one
he is in now with CFI.

**CIEP:** I understand you worked in a hospital before you came to Center for Independence (CFI). How did you select this field?

**Todd:** I worked in hospitals and the medical field for over 20 years. I was fortunate to have my education in cardiac electrophysiology paid for by a Hospital Corporation of America (HCA) entity in 1979. I went back to school to study social science and media in 1990 due to coming changes in U.S. healthcare that I did not agree with.

I discovered the Center For Independence (CFI) at Good Samaritan Hospital in 1999 and learned about the Independent Living Movement (IL Movement) over subsequent years of interactions with CFI. I started working with CFI as an IL educator in 2005 and have never looked back.

My experience in healthcare has been beneficial for me in the work I do at CFI as it affords me a bridge between the contradictions within the medical and IL (aka) social models. One of the cornerstones to IL Philosophy is self-determination! Understanding the key components of IL Philosophy is advantageous for patients and professionals. When people understand their right to advocate for themselves and systemic change it empowers them to take control and responsibility for the outcomes of their health and wellbeing!

**CIEP:** Have you personally experienced a disaster, and what was it like?

**Todd:** I have experienced hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, and wildfires and fear that I will again in this current era of climate crisis. I’m old enough to remember a time living in Florida when there was far less technology to warn residents of pending threats and hazards like hurricane formation. I learned quickly that warnings for earthquakes did not exist in 1980s California. Today,
I'm aware that though we have better technology, the threat and hazard risks for people with disabilities is still exponentially greater. That challenge for our CIEP is on my mind every day.

I often wake up at two or three in the morning wondering what it is that I could say or do that might garner enough attention to improve the lack of equity for people with disabilities and others with Access and Functional Needs (AFN) regarding risks and threats to their lives. It frustrates me to my limits to constantly witness the failures we accept in this “civilized world” to prioritize actions needed to protect human life equally. I am endlessly grateful for the small but growing group of advocates around our nation and world who never give up and never give in though they feel invisible and voiceless!

![Todd Holloway in COVID Personal Protective Equipment](image)

**Figure 1: Todd Holloway in COVID Personal Protective Equipment**

**CIEP:** Knowing that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other accessibility laws and regulations remain in full effect during disasters, what gaps have you seen in the field of emergency planning here in the state?

**Todd:** As you know, here in Washington State we have been somewhat spared from the effects of large catastrophic disasters in recent years. However, as the ADA, Rehab Act and other protections and laws are never suspended for any Public Health
Emergency (PHE) or disaster it’s hard to imagine that gaps do not exist as we encounter gaps in compliance daily.

Bringing awareness about these protections and laws does provide us with a platform to correct inequities and prioritize the rights of people with disabilities and others with Access and Functional Needs (AFN). During the global pandemic CIEP sprang into action immediately to assure that communications and physical access were addressed.

Recently, I testified to the Dept of Homeland Security’s Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) on the 50th Anniversary of the Rehabilitation Act that Sections 504 and 508 are still being ignored without consequences. Thank you [Jim House] and Steve Peck for writing to CRCL to ask if other states are translating alert and warning information into ASL! I expressed my concern that as we advocate and teach peers about their rights our efforts are often undermined by poor messaging, definitions, and enforcement at the federal level.

**CIEP:** What are some of the best practices have you noticed in inclusive emergency planning around Washington before, during, and after the wildfires that happened last summer?

**Todd:** During the pandemic our coalition was launched into a role that we knew existed, but others may not have especially outside of Washington State. We are fortunate that our state Department of Health (DOH) recognized the value of our coalition prior to the pandemic. In fact, they should be credited with making our vision possible. Since their investment in us we have leveraged a new position that we knew was needed at WA Emergency Management Division (EMD). That is why today we have Tracey Singh-Poole in the role of Disability and Access and Functional Needs (D-AFN) at EMD.
The pandemic forced state officials to join community organizations to solve accommodation issues very quickly. Our coalition is now engaged in quick turnaround ASL messaging with the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) and expanding services with deafblind peer organizations throughout the state. We accompanied public health and emergency managers in our Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) region of Puget Sound to make testing, quarantine, and vaccine sites accessible. I’m proud to tell you that our national partners and peers are jealous of these accomplishments and want to replicate that success to meet their community’s needs.

**CIEP:** Now that you have been with CFI and CIEP for a long time, what priorities do you envision for the future of AFN and the Independent Living Philosophy’s impact on stakeholders in inclusive emergency planning across the state?

**Todd:** The future can sometimes seem bleak. The reality is, however, we who survived the global pandemic and have continued to be challenged by the climate crisis, have the mixed blessing of the experience to plan from. We see the ripple effects of the pandemic on our healthcare systems and the constant damage to infrastructure by outcomes related to a climate in crisis. This era is not a new normal! It is unfortunately the beginning of an era of dramatic change that we must plan for and build resilience to.

Together we are being confronted by challenges from our natural environment, our social/political engagements, our physical wellness and mental health, and unknown obstacles in our technological and cyber-environments! This can seem hopeless, and the stress on those people we represent is under gravitational effects that seem unsustainable. That is why we must hold each other together while practicing self-care.
If we look to history to draw comparisons to today’s challenges, we will find that challenges are not experienced equally. No surprise there. However, if we use what we know to be true from our past to plan for our future, we should leverage our rights to achieve better outcomes. If we are silent or complacent, we can expect to fail. I am old enough to remember challenges that have been overcome. My wish for my peers of all ages is to live long enough to experience all the challenges, changes, and successes we are entitled to.

I am grateful that I reside in the State of Washington! I have witnessed and been part of progress here. I believe that our state is a welcoming environment for inclusion. That is a bold statement that I feel requires protection and diligence to maintain and expand on. We must grow our coalition and join forces with other groups of subject matter experts to allow for the natural progress that occurs when people are invited to the planning table.

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US!

I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again, a small group of advocates with the passion and will to make positive changes can often move an agenda forward faster than very large organizations or agencies. As our CIEP cadre grows we must identify the strengths our members have and empower them to direct us universally to promising practices that will improve the outcomes for everyone.

Change is inevitable, progress is not. Together we are obligated to strive for progress as we adjust to change.

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NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

FEMA designates the month of September each year as the National Preparedness Month. The theme for this year focuses on helping older adults prepare for disaster. Preparing for disasters is protecting everyone you love. Preparedness is something we need to do throughout the year, not just in September.

Take Control in 1. 2. 3. This year’s campaign is focused on preparing older adults for disasters. Specifically older adults from communities that are disproportionally impacted by all-hazard events, which continue to threaten the nation. Ready.gov advises us to take control by:

1. **Assess your needs.** If you have medications that need refrigeration, rely on mobility or assistive devices, or have a pet, you’ll need to understand how these variables will factor into what you’ll need to stay safe in a disaster or emergency.

2. **Make a plan.** Once you assess your needs, you can tailor your plans to make sure your needs are met. This can include building a kit that includes extra medication, having a way to store medications in an emergency and planning for your pets or service animals. If you’re an older adult or work with and support older adult communities visit Ready.gov/older-adults or (Espanol) Ready.gov/es/adultos-mayores for additional resources.

3. **Engage your support network.** Reaching out to family, friends and neighbors can help you build a support network that can support you before, during and after a disaster or emergency. Share each aspect of your emergency plan with everyone in your group, including a friend or relative in another area who would not be impacted by the same emergency who can help if necessary. Make sure everyone
knows how you plan to evacuate your home or workplace and where you will go in case of a disaster. Make sure that someone in your personal support network has an extra key to your home and knows where you keep your emergency supplies. Practice your plan with those who have agreed to be part of your personal support network. Also, see the links below for additional AFN preparedness tips from Ready.gov:

- [People with Disabilities | Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov/
• [We Prepare Everyday](https://www.ready.gov/
• [Disaster Preparedness Guide for Older Adults](https://www.ready.gov/

CIEP recognizes that planning for older adults is very similar to planning for people with disabilities. As our bodies age, our access and functional needs will require more attention and detailed planning. A high percentage of older adults above 65 have age-related hearing loss, are they still able to understand verbal announcements? A growing number of the elderly population have cognitive disabilities, will they be able to understand and follow emergency instructions? Others may have vision or mobility impairments, are emergency planners prepared to transport them where they need to go during evacuations or keep medical appointments for life sustaining treatments? Consult with CIEP for local resources to help meet the access and functional needs of people with disabilities and other marginalized communities, including older adults.
COMING EVENTS: (All events in Pacific Time Zone)

FEMA and FCC to Conduct Annual Nationwide Alerting Test
WHEN: October 4 at 11:20 am
WHERE: On radios and televisions (EAS or Emergency Alerting System), and on mobile devices (WEA or Wireless Emergency Alerts) **Nationwide**

Great Washington ShakeOut 15th Annual Earthquake Drill
WHEN: October 19 at 10:19 am
WHERE: Wherever you are: DROP! – COVER! – HOLD ON!
If you use a walker or wheelchair, LOCK! – COVER! – HOLD ON!

CIEP Monthly Stakeholder Calls (AFN Response to Disasters)
WHEN: First Wednesday from 10:00am to 11:00am
WHERE: Zoom link for monthly calls October – December 2023.
Email Jim.House@dshs.wa.gov for details and agenda.
WASILC Quarterly Meetings

WHEN: Thur. Oct. 5 at 9am–4pm / Fri. Oct. 6 at 9am–12pm
WHERE: Zoom — Email WASILC@dshs.wa.gov for details.

All CIEP Stakeholder Calls and WASILC Quarterly Meetings are open to everyone. ASL interpreters and CART will be provided. For other reasonable accommodation requests, please email us as early as possible.

About CIEP: CIEP is a statewide advisory group that brings expertise into disaster planning based on access and functional needs (AFN) faced by people with disabilities in three areas:

1) Effective Communications
2) Programmatic Access
3) Physical Access.

We also welcome suggestions from you for future issues of the quarterly CIEP ALERT newsletter.

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