



Functional Assessment Service Teams (FAST)



People with access and functional needs can (and must) be accommodated in general population emergency shelters when given the proper support. Meeting the needs of people with access and functional needs requires proper planning pre-incident and proper coordination during the incident. Support for this needs to come from government, non-governmental organizations, faith and community based organizations, and private sources.

Functional Assessment Service Teams (FASTs) will help assess people with access and functional needs and assist them by getting what they need to stay in a shelter.

Overview of FAST

Developed in California in 2006, Functional Assessment Service Teams (FASTs) are teams of trained social service professionals ready to respond to work in emergency shelters. FASTs work with emergency shelter personnel to conduct assessments for people with access and functional needs in community and American Red Cross emergency shelters. FASTs are deployed as the shelters open and work until no longer needed, or they may support several shelters. FASTs support the process of acquiring potential resources for people with access and functional needs. These resources may include durable medical equipment (DME), consumable medical supplies (CMS), essential medications, communication access and personal assistants. FAST members must possess the knowledge, skills and abilities to work in their area of specialty, and have an in-depth knowledge of populations they serve, their cultures, and service networks.

A fully staffed FAST has members with experience in the following areas:

- Aging (services/supports)
- Chronic health needs
- Vision loss
- Mental health disabilities
- Developmental and other cognitive disabilities (i.e. traumatic brain injury)
- Hearing loss
- Physical disabilities
- People Experiencing Homelessness
- Substance abuse issues

Pierce County Emergency Management developed a FAST program in September 2011 to expand the California model to meet the needs of people with access and functional needs of the Washington area during disasters. This has moved Washington one step closer to FEMA's concept of Whole Community by integrating people with access and functional needs into general emergency shelters. To date, Pierce County Emergency Management has trained over 30 people as FAST members.

Trainings

New member training: Two-day new member trainings are held annually at the Pierce County Emergency Operations Center or as requested by jurisdictions within the Puget Sound region.

Monthly Sustainment Meetings: FAST members attend monthly meetings, which focus on a different discipline. The purpose is to give an overview of the discipline and some quick pointers to FAST members who are not familiar with the issues surrounding the discipline. These meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month from 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. at the Pierce County Emergency Operations Center. Those interested in becoming FAST members are invited to participate in monthly meetings prior to attending training.

FAST Unit Leader Training: This training is for FAST members who wish to serve as unit leaders during deployment. This 6 hour training will cover Unit Leader roles and responsibilities, resource prioritization, effective leadership and conflict resolution.

For more information contact Serina McWha, Pierce County Emergency Management, 253-798-2203 or serina.mcwha@piercecountywa.gov.

BRINGING FAST INTO YOUR SHELTER

Now that you know a bit about FAST, how would you bring a team to your shelter?

Identifying the Need	<p>People with access and functional needs may include needing resources listed on the front page of this information or may need the services of FAST members also listed on the reverse side.</p> <p>There might be several ways to identify the need for FAST:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. You have been notified of a specific population needing shelter with access and functional needs.2. You begin to see people arriving who have unmet needs.3. Your shelter workers may recognize specific needs in daily operations.
Making the Request	<p>Once the need has been identified, the Shelter Manager (or his/her designee) would need to complete an ICS-213 General Message/Resource Request form to request a FAST for the shelter. Be sure to include any specific needs you may know about so the right members of the team might be selected. Send the form to the FAST Program Coordinator at serina.mcwha@piercecountywa.gov or call the Pierce County Duty Officer at 253-798-7470.</p>
Integrating the Team	<p>A FAST is made up of a FAST Unit Leader and FAST Members. While it is hoped the FAST Unit Leader will arrive first, it might be a member who takes on that role first. FAST members should have an ID card and a vest that will make them easy to recognize by your Shelter Registration team. Information will need to be relayed to them about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where in the shelter they may set up a work area• Physical layout of the shelter, rules, briefing times, ways to communicate with shelter staff and leadership• Shelter organization and key personnel• Shelter processes for approval, ordering, delivery, tracking of resources• Specific needs of shelter residents and where the residents are located
Demobilizing	<p>There are two ways FAST may be demobilized:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The shelter is being demobilized or2. The FAST is no longer needed <p>The shelter leadership will need to communicate to the FAST Unit Leader as early as possible about demobilization. When the shelter is being demobilized, certain steps need to be taken to ensure residents they have worked with have a plan to leave the shelter.</p>