

ARIZONA EMERGENCY RESPONSE INTERPRETER CREDENTIALING (ERIC) PROGRAM



ARIZONA DEPT OF EMERGENCY & MILITARY AFFAIRS
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Deaf and Hard of Hearing populations have historically struggled to gain access to information in their daily lives, a struggle which is only exacerbated during disasters and emergencies. A significant number of Arizonans are impacted:

- **~1.1 million Arizonans have some level of hearing loss;**
- **~25,000 are culturally Deaf and their primary language is American Sign Language (ASL).**

Emergency Response Interpreter Credentialing (ERIC)

The Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs (DEMA), Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM) and the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing (ACDHH) partnered to develop an all-hazard disaster training for American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters and Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) Captioners for all-hazard incidents. The 3-day training includes the Incident Command System, content and vocabulary related to four major types of disasters in Arizona, and practical training on integrating into the emergency response team.

ERIC trained ASL Interpreters and CART Captioners may be ordered for any type and complexity of incident by any land management (county, state, federal, tribal, etc.), emergency management (municipal, county, state, tribal) or emergency response agency (American Red Cross, etc.).

Program Successes

In 2017, ERIC Interpreters and Captioners were integrated into emergency response efforts for 10 incidents and 5 exercises.



ERIC Interpreter and Captioner provide access to information at a Palo Verde exercise



ERIC Interpreter works with the Incident Management Team (IMT) at the Frye Fire

ERIC PROGRAM

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ERIC Program Coordinator works with the IMT at the Cedar Fire



Why ERIC?

Without a thorough vetting and training system, Emergency Managers may unintentionally allow unqualified individuals to convey critical information. During Hurricane Irma, the community of Manatee County, Florida received nonsensical warnings from an unqualified signer, rather than critical safety information related to the hurricane's trajectory and subsequent evacuation notices.

With ERIC in place, Arizona's municipal, county, state and tribal agencies responding to emergencies are able to ensure their communications are accessible to the whole community.

Arizona Legislation

Effective August 3, 2018, under Arizona Revised Statutes 9-500.41, 11-269.20, and 41-5202, Arizona emergency response organizations at the municipal, county and state levels are required to establish a protocol and take reasonable steps to ensure that ERIC interpreters are provided during emergency response communications, such as media briefings, town hall meetings, and live streamed meetings or events when emergency related information is shared with the public. This law supports the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which require equal access to effective communication.

Requesting ERIC Services

The ERIC Program is managed by DEMA. As the state agency charged with coordination during emergent events, DEMA is well-positioned and well-equipped to implement the ERIC program. During an emergency, DEMA coordinates resources for state and local governments and ERIC interpreters and captioners are now another resource made available.

ERIC Resources can be requested by municipal, county or state or tribal agencies through the WebEOC system by submitting a 213RR, or through the ROSS system for fire incidents by submitting a General Message to the Arizona Integrated Dispatch Center.