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Emergency Preparedness Efforts to Reach Disability Community in Territories
with Support from Portlight Inclusive Disaster Strategies to
Association of University Centers on Disabilities

SILVER SPRING, Md. – [Association of University Centers on Disabilities \(AUCD\)](http://www.aucd.org) expands its emergency preparedness efforts with the creation of action steps toward building capacity of Territory emergency preparedness and response made possible by a grant from Portlight Inclusive Disaster Strategies. Five [AUCD](http://www.aucd.org)-member centers will participate in interviews with territory leaders from Guam, Puerto Rico, Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and U.S. Virgin Islands. The purpose of these interviews is to get insights on the emergency and disaster role of the Centers in all 5 territories and how to better serve children and adults with disabilities before, during and after disasters.

“We are thrilled [AUCD](http://www.aucd.org) was selected for this funding that benefits our field,” said Andrew Imparato, executive director of AUCD. “We are excited about the commitment of Portlight Inclusive Disaster Strategies to funding programs that provide emergency preparedness and response to underserved communities. We expect it to have a positive impact on the health of people with disabilities living in the Territories.” “As a territory leader and a member of AUCD’s national board, I am happy to support this much needed effort,” said Dr. Carol Salas Pagan, director of Puerto Rico’s University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities

The project, funded by Portlight Inclusive Disaster Strategies, will last approximately three months (March 2018 to June 2018) and will culminate with a white paper summary of actionable steps toward building capacity of Territory emergency preparedness and response. Portlight’s Board Chair Paul Timmons called this project “one of Portlight’s most important initiatives, drawing on the expertise of the AUCD network to address the disproportionate impact of disasters on children and adults with disabilities in often remote locations”.

Findings will be presented during the May 23-25, 2018 “Getting it Right National Inclusive Disaster Strategies Conference.”. Marcie Roth, CEO of the Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies, host of the conference, added “Getting It Right 2018 is an ideal forum for sharing AUCD’s recommendations, bringing emergency management, public health, higher education, researchers, policy makers, government and private industry together with disability leaders to drive improved disaster outcomes for local communities, inclusive of children and adults with disabilities.

[AUCD](http://www.aucd.org) is a national, nonprofit network of university-based centers and programs in every state and territory working to advance policy and practice for people living with disabilities and their families. This effort builds on AUCD’s [Public Health is for Everyone](http://www.aucd.org) program, which offers resources in critical areas of need, like emergency preparedness, for public health professionals to create programs for whole communities, including people with disabilities.

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