REPORT SUMMARY

Inclusive Emergency Alerts for Colorado: An Assessment and Recommendations for Language and Disability Considerations

SCAN FOR REPORT

This report presents findings and recommendations from research conducted by the Natural Hazards Center (NHC) at the University of Colorado Boulder in accordance with House Bill 23-1237.

The study purpose was to identify best practices for inclusive alerting and offer recommendations to improve current alert systems in Colorado that address language and access needs. The study was conducted between August 2023 and December 2023.

STUDY METHODS

62
Documents Reviewed

DOCUMENT REVIEW

NHC gathered and summarized research literature and other documents on emergency alerting language and disability access.

222
Responses From 57 Counties

SURVEY

NHC surveyed emergency response personnel in Colorado on the current alert systems, barriers, and abilities in delivering inclusive alerts.

18
Meetings with 36 People

PARTNER MEETINGS

NHC gathered additional information from emergency response professionals, alert provider companies, news reporters, and disability and language access advocates.

FINDINGS

1. Colorado has a patchwork of alerting systems
2. Authorities rely heavily on opt-in systems with low rates of uptake
3. Resource constraints hinder inclusive alerts
4. Guidance, funding, and personnel are needed to ensure inclusive alerts
5. Technical limitations are significant

RECOMMENDATIONS

PEOPLE

Hire state-level language access personnel

Develop formal relationships with LEP and disability communities

PRACTICES

Adopt a centralized alerting system and standardize practices

Create and distribute language and disability access resources

FUNDING

Support research in inclusive practices

Secure funding to support inclusive alerts

University of Colorado Boulder

NATURAL HAZARDS CENTER