

Comment	Name (Role, Affiliation)
<p><u>Can you provide suggestions for resources that should be included in the report, especially if they're related to Colorado?</u> Information on efficacy of outdoor warning sirens and public address systems, as well as digital internet IoT references</p>	<p>Robert Amick, (Retired Director of Communications/9-1-1 PSAP University of Colorado at Boulder, Public)</p>
<p><u>Can you provide suggestions for resources that should be included in the report, especially if they're related to Colorado?</u> Your team did an excellent job of gathering feedback from people responsible for crafting emergency alerts and companies that support alerts but as Sadie Martinez with DHSEM AFN tells Emergency Managers, we need to plan with the community not plan for the community. I don't recall seeing public comment feedback in the report - except for the opportunity to complete this feedback form and the listening sessions.</p> <p>How best can we incorporate public perception of what alert and warnings should look like into this study? If we only examine the struggles, we have issuing alerts and our perceptions of why people aren't enrolling in opt-in systems, we are only looking at half the data. Focus groups of residents from different areas of the state would be good to get different demographics and whether they do or don't subscribe to alerts and why.</p> <p><u>What else would you like to share?</u> To add to my comments on the evening listening session, I think it would be valuable for your research team to visit the 911 centers and emergency managers in different areas of the state to not only see the challenges they face in their daily work environment, staffing levels and community compositions but also see the different alert provider software solutions in person. Hearing about a system is one thing but seeing the challenges and delays in this alerting software would help give a greater understanding of why there are delays and the challenges in making alerts inclusive.</p> <p>Also, I would like to share a concern many emergency managers have, is that while we recognize the need for inclusive alerts and we are striving to improve our practices to be inclusive for multi-language and individuals with disabilities; creation of legislation or state standards that are absolute and say every alert must meet strict requirements before it is sent, has the potential to compromise public safety and lives by delaying alerts.</p> <p>As mentioned in the report, there is no one size fits all approach for alerts in Colorado and I would encourage that the final report and any standards or legislation that are crafted take this into account. Legislatures must realize additional resources are needed especially in rural and underserved communities to support agencies in creating all emergency alerts -including those in English and other languages.</p> <p>As the report indicates, for 911 centers and emergency managers who do emergency alerting, there is no easy solution to inclusive emergency alerts. The ultimate challenge we are trying to solve, is this: How do we provide resources to agencies large and small, 24/7/365 which enables them to craft a complete and detailed message about an active threat in their community which can be translated into multiple languages while being ADA compliant and has elementary school reading comprehension in just a matter of minutes and ensure the correct area of the community receives it? I would challenge research students at CU and other universities to help develop alert templates that address these challenges because when seconds count and lives are on the line these challenges are not easy to overcome.</p>	<p>Anonymous</p>

Comment	Name (Role, Affiliation)
<p>Email: My additional comments are we should start to address what is easier to fix. How do you eat an elephant?1. How do we alert folks who are blind? We educate them on opting in. I feel we can go through multiple agencies who serve folks who are blind. I can send those contacts to you.2. EAS must be audible and specific to what area is being impacted. When canceling an activity or immediate evacuation order, it must be audible as well. Not just a crawler on screen.3. EAS should also be in ASL. Breaking news type. Can EAS have flashers? I think major news stations can afford to hire and should have certified ASL interpreters for the news.4. WEAs should also be available in ASL. (Deaflink). I'm thinking that could be supported by state (maybe).5. There are grants from FEMA, UASI, other resources available that may be available. It's just a matter of research.</p>	Shirl Garcia (Disability Advocate)
<p>Email: Thank you for spearheading this project. I will be attending the session tomorrow afternoon. I just want to let you know that Emergency Management and CUPD have undertaken some of the issues regarding emergency notifications on campus. We have initiated language interpretation for our emergency notifications as well as increased our Clery geography for inclusive use on these notifications. Additionally, we have worked with our BPD partners in a collaborative manner on this notifications. If you like to hear more specifics about our accomplishments, please feel free to reach out to me.</p>	Anonymous
<p>Email: My feedback is specifically regarding accessibility for the blind community. For context, I'm blind myself. I've experienced these issues first-hand, and these issues have also come up in my study on Winter Storm Uri. In the report, emergency managers referenced developing systems that will convey messages by phone or "text to speech." However, the majority of blind people already have screen reading capabilities on cell phones, laptops, and computers. New and costly systems are generally not what are needed to address the most widespread accessibility issue we face in emergencies. The most pervasive need is that messages must be able to be accessed by our already-existing screen reading software. Messages that are disseminated through graphic-based programs like jpeg or screen shots are technically pictures. Yes, when sighted people are receiving these messages, they are reading text; but the text is embedded within a graphic. Blind people cannot read these messages at all using our screen reading technology. Smart phones and computers recognize graphic-based flyers as pictures, meaning screen reading software will not read the text embedded in these graphics. During Winter Storm Uri, emergency communication from official channels was sparse. People were sharing any information they could, but often, blind community members could not access the information independently because they were being shared through screen shots and other inaccessible graphics, even by local leaders. I think much of these issues could have been eased 1. If communication had been better from official emergency channels; and 2. If local leaders who were communicating with their constituents understood the importance of providing information in plain text rather than text embedded within graphics like jpeg or screen shots. The good news is this accessibility barrier can be addressed with little to no cost. The bad news is most people do not understand this central issue facing our community. Yes, there is a smaller population of newly-blind seniors who would likely benefit from phone messages and entirely new systems. But, the giant in terms of accessibility barriers is the issue I've described. Even the senior blind community members I interviewed for my study pointed to this graphic-based issue as their major accessibility concern regarding emergency communication.</p>	Angela Frederick (Sociologist, The University of Texas El Paso)
<p>Virtual Public Comment (Chat): Can the state send Public Service Announcements via Radio/TV to encourage people the importance of signing up with local counties to sign up.</p>	Anonymous
<p>Virtual Public Comment (Chat): Early alert and warning in addition to a host of notifications is challenging in rural and frontier Colorado.</p> <p>The National Weather Service is another trusted partner and resource for warning and notification. The NWS can launch a host of notifications including use of weather radio transmissions.</p>	Anonymous

Comment	Name (Role, Affiliation)
<p><u>Virtual Public Comment (Chat):</u> From a deaf perspective and for the deaf population, maybe you can look into service providers that have apps such as Nagish and AccessSOS to help contribute spreading alert info for the deaf community.</p>	Anonymous
<p><u>Virtual Public Comment (Chat):</u> I also believe that trusted community members could help educate communities that this is to help them..that we are here for them.</p>	Anonymous
<p><u>Virtual Public Comment (Chat):</u> Invertir en recursos humanos , como tambien en entrenar a promotoras, CHW, Navegadores y lideres bilingues , pueden jugar un rol importante para enseñar de una manera culturalmente competente a grupos en su comunidad. Las ferias educativas , pueden ser un buen medio para que estas promotoras puedan demostrar como bajar estas aplicaciones , o subscribirse, manejar las alertas y ayudarles a navegar en estos sistemas . Las barreras tecnologicas en la comunidad Latina, en especial en areas remotas y Rurales es un gran desafio. Esto es de suma importancia, y necesitamos crear estos HABITOS de Alertas y demostrar que son beneficios vitales. Investing in human resources, as well as training promotoras, CHW, navigators and bilingual leaders, can play an important role in teaching culturally competent groups in your community. Educational fairs can be a good way for these promotoras to demonstrate how to download or subscribe to these applications, manage alerts and help them navigate these systems. The technological barriers in the Latino community, especially in remote and rural areas is a big challenge. This is of utmost importance, and we need to create these alert HABITOS and demonstrate that they are vital benefits.</p>	Anonymous
<p><u>Virtual Public Comment (Chat):</u> It was mentioned earlier in your report that other states have something in place for state-wide communications? Are these systems paid for through state funds? Can you talk a little about this? Also, what works in those states and what does not work?</p>	Anonymous
<p><u>Virtual Public Comment (Chat):</u> Most people don't live and work in the same place especially in the metro. The various systems are completely independent and leave room for error. The country I work for, county I live in, and location of my children's school are all on different systems. I worry about those who don't seek the alerting , but have important roles in being notified.</p>	Anonymous
<p><u>Virtual Public Comment (Chat):</u> The mandate for ttys in call center seems illogical given that the deaf community no longer uses the equipment.</p>	Anonymous
<p><u>Virtual Public Comment (Chat):</u> TTY is non-existent almost anywhere. The equipment is defunct; The FCC has mandated that every call center have a TTY/TDD. But that's all that is mandated.</p>	Anonymous
<p><u>Virtual Public Comment (Chat):</u> US Census Bureau has info that will provide the various cultures , Disability Compendium. I will send the link, to Carson to send out. The info can support when applying for grants</p>	Anonymous
<p><u>What Colorado examples would you like to share that might help support the findings, like experiences or stories? Please provide specific details (who, what, where, why, how).</u> During the Iron Mountain fire in June 2002. I was personally involved when this fire initially started. I was on scene to help a friend evacuate their home and get animals out. I assisted with traffic, helping evacuate animals and assisting local authorities with food and water for workers. This is before emergency messages were in being.</p> <p><u>What else would you like to share?</u></p>	Kris Corey (Fremont County Department of Public Health and Environment)

Comment	Name (Role, Affiliation)
<p>I think the state should be more involved in getting more people signed up for Emergency Alerts. Sign up information should be at all DMV's, Motor Vehicle Divisions within in county, Planning and zoning Departments, School Registration should be passing out information, county DHS offices and Public Health agencies should be handing out information of signing up. Emergencies are going to happen...we need to be prepared so most people in are state are aware of what is going on in their counties. The State of Colorado needs to be proactive in making this happen. It must start from the top. In the world we live in not just natural disaster but also terrorist..etc.</p>	
<p><u>What Colorado examples would you like to share that might help support the findings, like experiences or stories? Please provide specific details (who, what, where, why, how).</u>Waldo Canyon Fire did not have the best notifications for the DHH. That group got their information from social media from other friends/peers to evacuate. Blessing, the first responders did well as no casualties occurred that I know of. Shortly thereafter, we had the Black Forest Fire, the notifications were much better, captioning and scroll bar notifications on TV. Did have some on-site ASL interpreters, but they were not always spotlighted. We had a few post incident meetings and concluded it best we collaborate more effectively with the Colorado Broadcasters Association (CBA) to allow PIOs and CBA work together to maximize notification and communication details to the general public. Just recently, we've started up ERI (Emergency Response Interpreter) program. Started with ASL, hopefully will be able to include other languages down the road as we build up on this.<u>What else would you like to share?</u>Consider inviting people with disabilities and/or their local Center for Independent Living (or other entity that has resources for AFN population) on their planning teams & meetings.</p>	<p>Billy S. Allen, Center for Independence</p>
<p><u>What else would you like to share?</u>Dear Review Committee,Thank you for the in-depth review of inclusive alerts and thank you Representative Velasco for sponsoring this bill.Our Denver-based company has been supporting inclusive alerts for six years in Colorado (including 12 county emergency notification systems, and dozens of school systems and nonprofits) through a user-designed platform that is equity-based and accommodates language diversity, literacy, privacy, government distrust, and income challenges. ReachWell is a communication platform, resource hub, and community connector for disadvantaged families throughout the state.In review of the recommendation we noticed a major oversight and fear that excluding proven and reliable AI translation would be unsustainable, unrealistic, and could result is catastrophic message delays. ReachWell has the capacity to support messaging across multiple counties simultaneously. Message quality is addressable with proper composition. Additionally, it is a cost-effective solution that we have successfully implemented with positive feedback across Colorado.Additionally, we have additional recommendations based on the findings and the committee's recommendations:<u>Finding 1:</u> There is a patchwork of alerting systems.We appreciate the counties' ability to choose an alerting system that supports their unique needs. We also understand the need for counties to have consistency as a public-facing accessible alerting platform which is why ReachWell is being chosen by counties across the state that have a variety of Emergency Notification Systems. ReachWell can support all the systems while providing residents with one easy interface. Further, we ensure dispatch operators and centers do not need to modify their procedures whatsoever.<u>Finding 2.</u> Colorado relies heavily on opt-in emergency alert systems but most report opt-in rates below 40%. These systems create barriers for everyone, but especially those who don't speak English or who have disabilities. Tracking alert subscribers and measuring the efficacy of alerts is a challenge. ReachWell agrees that opt-in systems are challenging due to high barriers of adoption. Our world experiences high levels of government distrust where individuals do not wish to share personal information. Opt-in rates also suffer when the method of communicating requires residents to maintain phone numbers and email which we know doesn't happen among lower-income communities. Further, complicated sign ups, passwords and logins prevent low-tech residents from opting in. ReachWell designed its platform to support all these use cases by not requiring personally identified information, logins, or signups, allowing low-income residents to continue to be alerted on their device after they've discarded their emails and phone numbers and allowing users to choose their own language and receive alerts without being tracked.Perhaps most importantly, in areas where ReachWell is utilized residents are receiving alerts and learning about emergency notifications through their trusted providers like nonprofits, schools and other social benefit providers. Regardless if a user is opting into receive emergency alerts, they're able to be notified through other ReachWell channels</p>	<p>Zuben Bastani (Founder, Reachwell)</p>

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<p>they follow, thereby spreading critical messages to all members of the community. Finding 3: Many emergency response personnel are interested in incorporating systems and practices that would make alerts more inclusive but need more guidance, funds, and personnel to adequately do so. Many ReachWell partners have struggled with identifying, training, and retaining the right personnel to support their alerts. Even with a fully staffed team it's impossible to know the languages required in any given situation. Further, when seconds mean lives waiting on humans to deliver translations for minutes could result in catastrophic consequences. Prior to launching ReachWell in a community, we work with staff to provide marketing and communications training and test template crisis messages to enable more local partners to be better prepared before a critical situation arises. ReachWell has firsthand experience recognizing how two identically trained individuals can interpret an event and translate it differently. We have honed our message translation service for low-income and migrant communities for years. Finding 4: Planning for language and disability access is inconsistent across the state implementation for language and disability access is varied and inconsistent across the state. Some alert authorities are not aware of options for making alerting more accessible or face issues with existing systems – as a result they rely on practices that may not meet community needs. Others are making great strides but still face challenges. ReachWell is seen as a leader in accessible alerts supporting not just language translation, but literacy, deaf/hard-of-hearing, and the visually impaired with an easy tool to keep residents safe and connected. As we have outreached to communities, government agencies, nonprofits and schools, we are often welcomed by people striving to engage families and meet people where they are at, but lack the time to research options, let alone develop a tool that can be customized to enable them to meet the vast needs of all its residents equitably. As we work with our local partners to improve access to the information and resources, we are also sharing best practices across our communities and constantly innovating from lessons learned to improve our technology and services for everyone. Finding 5: The technical and practical limitations of emergency alerts that hinder most people compound the challenges faced by those with disabilities or linguistic considerations. These include delays in technology upgrades, limited awareness of systems, pushback from private industry, among others. ReachWell is designed to support the low tech-literate residents. Working with newcomer families, we are aware of the hurdles tech adoption brings which is why the friction of adoption has been minimized to not only get users to adopt but keep them connected long after their devices change or their contact information changes. Recommendation: Hire State-Level Personnel to Address Language and Disability Access Needs ReachWell appreciates this idea, however, the challenge of maintaining and predicting the languages needed is nearly impossible. ReachWell can support this with accurate consistent communication regardless of the experience level of a translator. Develop Formal Relationships with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and Disability Communities With high levels of government distrust building direct connections is extremely difficult. ReachWell has been successful partnering with trusted messengers, navigators and promotoras to reach disadvantaged communities. These connections allow for life-saving emergency messages to reach and connect with residents through ReachWell who would be otherwise disconnected. For example, in Larimer County, ReachWell partners with schools and nonprofits to deliver emergency communications directly to families without adding to the workload of the schools or the nonprofits. Standardize Alerting Practices Across the State ReachWell agrees that standardization could potentially improve the situation if the right solutions were selected to meet the needs of all communities in Colorado, however, the reality is that counties have the autonomy to make their own decisions as it relates to their Emergency Notification Systems. ReachWell allows for counties to choose their own system while connecting with a standardized platform that is inclusive and accessible without training, significant costs nor changes to operating procedures. Create and Distribute Language and Disability Access Resources ReachWell has been advising our partners on how best to disseminate resources. When launching in a county, ReachWell identifies the trusted messengers within the county who are connected with disadvantaged populations. In partnership with those organizations, ReachWell is able to connect communities with service providers and emergency alerts. ReachWell looks forward to continuing to partner with the State of Colorado to share resources and its knowledge of engaging our communities. Thank you, Zuben Bastani Founder and President, ReachWell zuben@reachwellapp.com</p>	
<p>What else would you like to share? Colorado has a significant tourist population, so an additional obstacle to effective emergency messaging is that those who receive the</p>	<p>Anonymous</p>

Comment	Name (Role, Affiliation)
<p>message may not be familiar with local landmarks, specific roads, etc. I live in Estes Park, and only one evacuation route has cell service-and not for Verizon customers. A summer day may see 80,000 visitors to Estes: once those visitors head out of town into the canyons, there's no alerting them to something like a washed out road or downed tree ahead-which means thousands of people may get trapped in the canyons</p>	
<p><u>What else would you like to share?</u>There's a reference to possibly developing an advisory committee. I'd like to recommend the strategic use of an existing statewide committee of refugee and immigrant leaders. This is the New Americans Community Advisory Committee, which reports to Colorado's Office of New Americans in CDLE. This group would likely be interested to engage strategically on this issue and could share information regarding programs, resources, etc. to their communities statewide. You can use the request form at the top of this web page to request their engagement on a topic: https://cdle.colorado.gov/new-americans-community-advisory-committee</p>	<p>Meg Sagaria-Barritt (Colorado Refugee Services Program (state refugee office))</p>
<p>What parts of the report should we explain or support better?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Under 'Recommendations → People → Develop Formal Relationships with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and Disability Communities' (p. ii and p. 16): In addition to establishing direct relationships with communities, including via “developing steering committees, forming advisory councils, and hiring community champions or multilingual staff,” alert authorities should partner with existing Community Based Organizations that already have trusted relationships with members of the LEP and disability communities. - Under 'Recommendations → Data and Funding → Secure Funding to Support Inclusive Alerts' and elsewhere, as appropriate: The state should ensure funding for supplemental/increased compensation for internal multilingual/bilingual staff who (a) provide interpretation and/or translation support but (b) were not hired specifically as translators or interpreters. - Under 'Recommendations → Practices → Create and Distribute Language and Disability Access Resources' (p. iii and p. 16): In addition to trainings “on cultural competency, community needs, technology options, and creating shared resources,” the report should recommend trainings related to cultural humility, intercultural communication, bias-awareness, translation best-practices, and other relevant topics.” - Under both 'Recommendations → Practices → Create and Distribute Language and Disability Access Resources' and 'Recommendations → People → Hire State-Level Personnel to Address Language and Disability Access Needs (p. ii and p. 16), or elsewhere in 'Recommendations: Via formal research and consultation with Community Based Organizations and communities, the Office of Emergency Management and/or local alert authorities should determine the methods of communication most effective/useful for particular populations. Methods of communication might include face-to-face, social media, radio, TV, online video, text, snail mail, email, and phone call. A community's preferred method(s) of communication may vary based on the nature and urgency of a particular situation. <p>Is there any missing or incorrect information? Please include page numbers and location in report (e.g., page 7, line number 365) along with your suggestions for updating information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On p. 1 under 'Legislation on Inclusive Alerting' - should be 1964 Civil Rights Act (instead of 1965) - On p. 3 - graphic indicates that 36 individuals attended partner meetings; executive summary states 37. 	<p>Kate Greuel (The Spring Institute)</p>

Comment	Name (Role, Affiliation)
<p>What parts of the report should we explain or support better?Expected behavior of the public in response to mass information public safety warnings of natural or human caused hazardsCan you provide suggestions for resources that should be included in the report, especially if they're related to Colorado?Dr. Dennis Mileti's research on best practices for hazard warning protocols implementation</p>	<p>Robert Amick (2) (Retired Director of Communications/9-1-1 PSAP University of Colorado at Boulder, Public)</p>
<p>What parts of the report should we explain or support better? Finding 2. Colorado relies heavily on opt-in emergency alert systems but most report opt-in rates below 40%. These systems create barriers for everyone, but especially those who don't speak English or who have disabilities. Tracking alert subscribers and measuring the efficacy of alerts is a challenge. - I question two aspects of this finding. 1) The use of the word "barrier." The first definition is something that "blocks or is intended to block passage." Now there are issues with getting people to sign up, but none of them are INTENDED to block people from signing up. This also makes the claim that opt-in systems CREATE barriers (or whatever word you land on.) They absolutely do not create mistrust or technological requirements. Those are all factors that need to be incorporated in getting people signed up. Everbridge did not create those. Finally, there really shouldn't be any difficulty tracking alert subscribers. The systems give us a report updated in real-time showing how many people are signed up. Since we know our population, we can come pretty close to knowing what percentage (assuming some non-residents sign up but a much smaller number) is signed up.</p> <p>Can you provide suggestions for resources that should be included in the report, especially if they're related to Colorado? I would like to make sure Dr Sutton's Message Design Dashboard is included. I also would include best-practices suggesting people should NOT use AI to develop messages in other languages. However, you should also make it clear that if they use nothing, then the only message going out is in English. How do people with LEP translate those messages themselves?</p> <p><u>Is there any missing or incorrect information? Please include page numbers and location in report (e.g., page 7, line number 365) along with your suggestions for updating information.</u> I would like to see more information on how alert senders don't know if they send multi-lingual or accessible reports. They are the ones sending - how can they not know?</p>	<p>Rob Dale (Ingham County (MI) Emergency Management)</p>
<p>What parts of the report should we explain or support better?Finding 5. technical and practical limitations of emergency alerts - in some locations, PSAPs/911 fail to send the alerts and to update alerts. They are either late, or incomplete. A powerful tool, underutilized or incorrectly utilized. Staff may be impacted by time, skills, and training, with no plan B. SOPs do not exist to require annual or more frequent testing, evaluation, and reporting. (How many calls attempted, failed, successful, etc.) The public is continually told to sign up, yet there is no accountability when alerts are not issued. Systems such as Everbridge should allow the public to see an emergency alert listed in the mobile app or online, even if they are outside the affected area. There is also an overreliance on social media as an Alternate Vendor option.Practices - Standardize Alerting Practices Across the State. Require E911 authorities or others to report annually on their programs, not just encourage signup. These are powerful tools when they are used and used correctly.<u>Can you provide suggestions for resources that should be included in the report, especially if they're related to Colorado?</u>Evacuation language consistency - Evacuation Order (vs. Mandatory Evacuation) should be the standard language. 24-33.5-704/June 27, 2002 opinion letter of then AG Salazar - the use of the word mandatory should be avoided, as Evacuation Order is implied vs enforced (which is generally not the case).<u>What Colorado examples would you like to share that might help support the findings, like experiences or stories? Please provide specific details (who, what, where, why, how).</u>Saint Charles Fire Oct 23 - pre-evacuation orders were made in 2 counties. The pre-evacuation order in one county was expanded, and there is no</p>	<p>Anonymous</p>

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<p>indication that the Everbridge order was updated/sent, as it was not reflected with an expanded map. These tools, like the maps, are useful to the media and need to be shared publicly via a website or social media. Nov 20, 2023, Custer County report of shots fired, was reported instead as a high-risk situation. Everbridge notification was not visible to the public, WEA alert was received outside the intended audience and had unintended consequences, public trust was impacted, and the public turned to social media for timely information, outside of local authorities. While LEP & the disabled are issues, the larger issue (at least in rural areas), is will the public actually receive a message that is timely, accurate and trusted information at all. Like any corrective action, someone locally must own it and be responsible for the emergency notifications.</p>	
<p><u>What parts of the report should we explain or support better?</u> General comment: Would be a little more specific on what is meant by "people with disabilities," a phrase used several times. Those who are blind/visually impaired, deaf/hard of hearing, have behavioral health conditions (mental health and/or substance use disorders) have developmental, cognitive and intellectual disabilities or have physical health conditions have different needs with respect to alerts/warnings and other aspects of emergency response. While some of these groups are discussed, there may not be a one size fits all approach.</p>	Mitchell Berger (Public)
<p><u>What parts of the report should we explain or support better?</u>I think the report is fine as far as it goes. I think the findings are correct and while there is gloss and points of emphasis that could be added, you have captured the basic issues.I am very focused on what action items flow from this report. After all, it's pointless to just catalog problems without a more fulsome conversation on ways to address the problems. There are precious few "fixes" mentioned in the report and almost no discussion of implementation. In order to evaluate "fixes", it would be useful to readers if you talked about the legal and legislative impediments to some of the options suggested. These are especially important if there is to be any discussion of State-wide standards. That would be devilishly hard in the General Assembly without money. For example, a state-wide notification system/contractor allowing a no cost opt-in for local jurisdictions, which I happen to think is the best idea in the report, or even state-wide standards, would have to deal with "home rule" considerations. Legislation could be crafted that makes this a "matter of state-wide" concern but you still would not want to preempt those communities that want to do more than would be offered in a state-wide system. The legislation would also need to provide a backstop to communities with human resource limitations. That could be done through the Emergency Management Office in DHSEM so that local law, fire or emergency management officials could call in and request the alert to be broadcast.Yes, I know this requires a fiscal note in the General Assembly. I don't see a way to approach these problems without the State spending money. Of course, all of this is still only a half measure. The quality and accessibility of the alerts will be a long-term research problem.</p>	Timothy Gablehouse (Public)
<p><u>What parts of the report should we explain or support better?</u>Recommendations: how and when will they be implemented especially those that at stated wide level and for smaller counties or communities.<u>Can you provide suggestions for resources that should be included in the report, especially if they're related to Colorado?</u>Partnership with local cultural broker. Look to develop MOU with non-profit that understand the BIPOC and disabled communities.<u>What else would you like to share?</u>Community engagement has to be embedded in every aspect of emergency management from education to prepare, disaster response to recovery. Also consider that all your first responders are not the only ones that experience trauma when dealing with disasters. Thank you for making the efforts and I look forward to a statewide level of inclusion that helps all of us.</p>	Carmen Ramirez (City of Longmont)
<p><u>What parts of the report should we explain or support better?</u> Technology limitations, that is I only have a landline (no texting) and a desk top computer with email.</p> <p><u>Can you provide suggestions for resources that should be included in the report, especially if they're related to Colorado?</u></p>	Anonymous

Comment	Name (Role, Affiliation)
<p>Will emergency notifications be made by phone (not texting) if you only have a landline?</p> <p><u>What Colorado examples would you like to share that might help support the findings, like experiences or stories? Please provide specific details (who, what, where, why, how).</u></p> <p>I live in Martin Adres. At the time of the NCAR fire, I only received emails. I never received a phone call on my landline advising me to evacuate.</p>	
<p><u>What parts of the report should we explain or support better?</u>Thank you for offering the report and the public discussion. As a person who is profoundly Deaf, Inclusive Language and Emergency alerts are of serious concerns. We need to take the lessons learned during hurricane Katrina and implement them in Colorado. The system was NOT prepared to address the needs of people who were deaf and hard of hearing. Hodge podge systems must work with the Deaf and disabled community to insure the effectiveness of alerts and language that is accessible. When I read the report were it was mentioned TTYs being mandated by the FCC, that showed clearly the organizations are out of touch with the Deaf community as TTYs have not been in use by the Deaf community for over a decade. Research and actively include members of the Community to educate local programs so they know how to update their alerting and communication systems.I agree with the recommendation for people, practice, data and funding. Take this a step further in hiring state level personnel with disabilities who specialize in emergencies or have fema training.<u>What else would you like to share?</u>Insure that funding is available for alerting devices and not at extra cost. For example an audio fire alarm can be picked up at any hardware store for \$25 or less. However visual alarms for deaf people can cost upwards to \$50-\$200 for a deaf person. These are far outside many deaf persons budgets. Thus many deaf households do not have fire alarms that are of any benefit, especially while sleeping.</p>	Sheryl Emery (CDPHE)
<p><u>What parts of the report should we explain or support better?</u>The "hiring multilingual" staff is very broad and dangerously general when we are combining emergency notifications and language access and state non-standardized interpretation and translation qualifications to enable a multilingual person to work in OEM agencies and related agencies. Without acknowledging that Colorado has not standardized the requirements to qualify as a multilingual employee the report glosses over a critical issue that language access professionals have been very vocal about. I recommend adding more information on what you define as multilingual in the report. There is a very wide gap, we find, between multilingual employees that are qualified based on language proficiency testing and those that state they are native speakers. We see many employers not use proficiency tests when someone states they are native speakers. I can use myself as an example. I am first generation American, and my native language is Spanish. I never attended school for the Spanish language and only know what was spoken in my home and in Mexico when I visited. I know my limitations and I am true to my profession; many are not. Adding that you may not know the if the multilingual employees you reference in the report are certified by a language proficiency test is very important. Adding a recommendation for the state to standardize the requirements for qualifications to be employed as a multilingual employee who is expected to translate, interpret, comprehend, read, and write and that it is a best practice to employ qualified multilingual employees in OEM and related agencies elevates the level of proficiency and effectiveness of that agency. There is nothing like lived experience and that will bring a new perspective to this work and new solutions to this issue. Recommend explaining or writing something in your methodology that your feedback only incorporated Spanish speakers and all of those different language communities you were able to speak to. It is important to note who was not able to give feedback, for example in Denver, our largest LEP population is Vietnamese not Spanish. The absence of a population does not mean they do not exist, it's just that they were not in the room. This is an interesting study: https://niwaplibrary.wcl.american.edu/wp-content/uploads/LEP-Data-by-region-1.pdfThe report does not discuss the importance of demographic analysis. Without this data which is extremely particular to each geo area of Colorado, planners are in a disadvantage and communities that are usually excluded remain excluded.<u>Can you provide suggestions for resources that should be included in the report, especially if they're related to Colorado?</u>In your recommendation of people, I recommend being more specific on the kinds of skills these</p>	Claudia Castillo (Language Access Professional, Public)

Comment	Name (Role, Affiliation)
<p>people need to have or recommend having. Many do not realize that there are language access professionals that are subject matter experts in not only federal regulations but in nationwide best practices that can benefit emergency agencies. Our work involves language services procurement, quality control of vendors, demographic analysis based on the Census and local data as the Census is limited, best practices for reaching LEP populations, and know community engagement techniques. I recommend adding in your people section, the hiring of subject matter experts like language access professionals. When creating working groups and the like, lets not forget the language access and disability rights professional that are subject matter experts.Can you create an evaluation table of all systems, vendors, and software that you did research with criteria such as: 1) supports special characters; 2)multilingual messaging; 3) integrates with FEMA's IPAWS; 4) integrated mobile app; 5) opt in only; 6) can geo target mass notification; 7) capable of sending maps, images of where the emergency is located; etc etc etc. It helps all of us understand the limitations that emergency leaders are facing and helps professionals in language access and disability rights in developing solutions. <u>What Colorado examples would you like to share that might help support the findings, like experiences or stories? Please provide specific details (who, what, where, why, how).</u>I am unsure of what is required to opt in for alerts but if a requirement is an email, that is a definite barrier for LEP residents. The example I have is not with emergency systems but is an example of how and why minorities and especially LEP personnel were left behind during the covid vaccination: senior citizens trying to obtain appointments for their shots could only do them online, once they found someone to assist them, an email was required - that barred many LEP senior citizens from obtaining their healthcare. I from Colorado personally assisted my LEP parents in Texas to obtain their covid shot during the covid panic and pandemic. Walgreens, CVS and Target all had online systems for appointments and one of the requirements was an email. That is a barrier. I used my email for one parent and when used the same email for the other parent, the system would not allow me to as the email was already used. Immensely frustrating. The report does not discuss the importance of demographic analysis. Without this data which is extremely particular to each geo area of Colorado, planners are in a disadvantage and communities that are usually excluded remain excluded<u>What else would you like to share?</u>Thank you for this amazing and very important work. Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts and please reach out to me if needed: ccbreakinglanguagebarriers@gmail.com</p>	
<p><u>What parts of the report should we explain or support better?</u>Under the "People" pillar of recommendations, the report should highlight that bilingual/multilingual staff are not, by default, the appropriate person to translate messages. Relying on professional linguists, including translators, should be highlighted. When bilingual staff translate, they often make errors that lead to confusion and leave community members "milling" the message for meaning. On your own list of barriers to issuing inclusive alerts you state problems with word choice, connotation, usage and correct use of diacritical marks. In Spanish, all these issues are often a result of a bilingual person translating materials. Your own presentation of this draft report relied on poorly translated materials--the presentation had too many spelling mistakes (gobierno, aceso), missing diacritical marks (policia, politico), incorrect word choice (autoridad de fuego, a través del estado), and the translation of findings 3, 4 and 5 rendered a very confusing message because the person who translated tried to mimic the English-language sentence structure. Bilinguals pose a threat to inclusive emergency notifications when they take an English message written in Plain Language and render a Spanish message that does not conform to the standards of Lenguaje Claro. Bilingual staff should not translate messages, particularly not for languages that are spoken commonly in the U.S. (and Spanish, in particular). The report should not accept Emergency Response Professional's opinion that AI programs are working well. I live in a county that is relying on AI messaging via ReachWell and recently received a message that was contradictory ("shelter-in-place is lifted" and "continue to shelter-in-place" were both included in the same message). What <i>*is*</i> working with AI and ReachWell is that staff takes a message, inputs it, and ReachWell provides a message in another language. However, working well should mean that ReachWell is rendering the message correctly and accurately. While I can report mistranslations and they will be fed to the AI engine, I am not aware of any systemic evaluation of the translations for any language. So, how can these monolingual emergency professionals really know "it is working well"?<u>Can you provide suggestions for resources that should be included in the report, especially if they're related to Colorado?</u>The Colorado Interpreters and Translators Association (CITA) and the American Translators Association (ATA). PLAIN (Plain Language Association International)--they have resources on how to write using the</p>	Stewart Sifuentes

Comment	Name (Role, Affiliation)
<p>standards of Lenguaje Claro. Language and Accessibility in Alert and Warnings Workgroup (LAAWW), currently meets on Teams on the 2nd Thursday of the month, please reach out if you need me to connect you with them. <u>What else would you like to share?</u> Language Justice and Language of the Heart all sounds very nice, but there are no Federal regulations that require them. So we must also look at Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Executive Order 13,166 and A.G. Garland's 2022 Memorandum on Language Access. All these define that LEP persons must have Meaningful Access to information (and services), and then defines that Meaningful Access is access that is (1) not significantly restricted, (2) not delayed, and (3) not of inferior quality than the access provided to English proficient people. Currently, both AI and bilingual staff are creating inferior quality translation of messages. For the most part, staff is not assessed for high proficiency in writing, not trained on translation theory and practice, and not trained on plain language principles specific to the Spanish language.</p>	
<p><u>What parts of the report should we explain or support better?</u>We felt the report was well constructed and covered the main challenges facing Emergency Managers in their role of sending accessible alerts to diverse communities during an emergency event. Thank you for mentioning Deaf Link and the Accessible Hazard Alert System (AHAS). I'm not sure if the descriptors used in the report adequately explain that AHAS alerts are constructed to address the communication needs for multiple disabilities to support the needs of persons who are Deaf and require American Sign Language (ASL) video, English/Spanish text for Hard of Hearing, braille reader text formats that support persons who are Blind or Deaf-Blind and use Braille, as well as English or Spanish voice for persons who may be Blind and need to hear the message. There was some mention about AI generated translations being in adequate and that alerts need to be reviewed by humans. The AHAS system uses live ASL interpreters (advanced certified) and Spanish language interpreters trained in Emergency Management terminology (Humanware) combined with the latest technology support to maximize the best outcomes for delivery of accessible alerts for these two languages. The system operates 24/7/365. We agree with the 3 main challenges being people, practices and data / funding. The 3 elements or the lack thereof drives many of the issues emergency managers face. Of the 3, sufficient funding sources can help with rectifying the first 2. It was mentioned that covering program costs is out of reach for many communities. One possibility at least for providing the AHAS program would be for the state to fund a program that allows each county to access services for their Deaf, HOH, Blind, and Deaf-Blind communities. Some economies of scale can be achieved by looking at statewide or regional approaches to alerting. <u>What Colorado examples would you like to share that might help support the findings, like experiences or stories? Please provide specific details (who, what, where, why, how).</u> Jurisdictional boundaries' can separate the have's and the have-not's. Communities that have siblings, friends, and relatives that live in contiguous counties where one person has access to accessible alerting and the other does not can force some citizens to sign-up for programs that don't actually cover where they work or live. Subscribers to LETA can get accessible alerts in ASL video, but other counties don't. A regional approach to accessible alerts could help solve this. <u>What else would you like to share?</u> We agree with the idea of hiring state level staff to help address language access needs and support the overall Access and Functional Needs program. Emergency Manager training at the state and county level to better understand Deaf, Blind and Deaf-Blind cultures and their specific communication needs would be very beneficial. Grant writing support for counties would also be beneficial. Helping the opt-in numbers go up is a function of direct outreach to the various language challenged communities in Colorado including those with disabilities. Direct outreach that includes accessible preparedness information, accessible townhall meetings, social media, going directly to Centers for Independent Living and other organizations and getting to know the local Deaf, HOH, Blind and Deaf-Blind organizations. Providing the right messenger is also important. Deaf signing to Deaf, Blind speaking to blind, etc. This is the hard work of getting people to sign-up to receive emergency information and can't be solved with technology only.</p>	Heller
<p><u>What parts of the report should we explain or support better?</u> What exactly the role of the State is and how mandates will be funded and supported through training and staff.</p> <p><u>Can you provide suggestions for resources that should be included in the report, especially if they're related to Colorado?</u> Everbridge is a huge vendor in our community and I barely saw them mentioned. I want to hear what they're doing.</p>	Anonymous

Comment	Name (Role, Affiliation)
<p><u>What else would you like to share?</u> I feel like this report relies heavily on the State to implement standards. While standards are good, how would this affect local jurisdictions with existing contracts if we moved to a on-vendor system? What if a jurisdiction has a good program and is now being forced to switch vendors? I'm confident in saying that every jurisdiction wants to be more inclusive, but we're just so short on resources to do so. We have ingrained cultural issues with burn out and staff turnover (especially in Dispatch!) and unrealistic expectations of Emergency Management sometimes that we need to address those and build from there.</p>	