



# *Be Prepared Ohio*

## ***Be Prepared Ohio* event focuses on helping most vulnerable during emergencies**

During Hurricane Katrina, we watched as some of our country's most vulnerable citizens – older adults and people with disabilities – struggled to get help or find care in the midst of chaos and confusion. Caregivers threw their hands in the air in desperation and exhaustion when medicine, supplies and transportation were nowhere to be found. These images are still fresh in our minds.

***Be Prepared Ohio***, an event planned for Sept. 22 in southwest Ohio, will focus on one of the toughest lessons learned during that difficult time: people with functional needs (older adults, people with disabilities, etc.) require more help than that which is provided through traditional emergency response systems. We know now that this vulnerable group needs help with advance planning – making an emergency plan, gathering supplies – and they will require special assistance *during* an emergency.

***Be Prepared Ohio*** is a first-of-its-kind event that will bring together emergency responders, public health and social service agencies, people with functional needs and their caregivers to share information and resources on how to prepare for emergencies. The event will include educational tracts for professionals (CEUs available), as well as the general public.

It is no coincidence that ***Be Prepared Ohio*** is scheduled for September. September is National Preparedness Month, a time when emergency response agencies work to increase public awareness about emergency preparedness, and Americans are encouraged to participate in activities planned in their area.

For information about attending or participating in this event, please contact Amy Leonhardt, Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio, at (513) 345-3367 or [aleonhardt@help4seniors.org](mailto:aleonhardt@help4seniors.org).

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