

“No Person Left Behind” Pilot Program

Final Paper

Allison Carter

PAD 6406

International College

August 15, 2006

## Table of Contents

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Table of Contents.....        | 2  |
| Abstract.....                 | 3  |
| Major Research Questions..... | 4  |
| Research Outcomes.....        | 5  |
| Conclusions.....              | 15 |
| References.....               | 16 |
| Appendix A.....               | 18 |
| Appendix B.....               | 19 |
| Appendix C.....               | 20 |

### Abstract

Floridians have been aware that they are susceptible to hurricanes and other natural disasters. When Hurricane Charley hit two years ago, only a few people were prepared and this became a very important problem as people became aware that they need a disaster plan in place. The “No Person Left Behind” Pilot Program was started in the aftermath of Hurricane Charley, because Linda Carter saw that there was a need for emergency preparedness, not only for the people who had families and pets, but also people with disabilities.

This program has gained local and state media attention along with the attention of lawmakers within our area. People have responded and there is a need to get something like this started so that we are prepared for something that could be even more catastrophic. Keeping this in mind, we have to think about Hurricane Katrina that happened in New Orleans and we have to ask the question, “what if?” If New Orleans had a program like this in place, would all of those thousands of people have died or would they have some chance at life?

Keeping the two questions in mind as you read this paper, the writer examines the need for a program like this, and she also discusses where it is at within the state. Many programs like these are pending because of state funding and issues that deal along those lines. State funding is the key component to any program being approved and implemented, but it takes effort and time on both ends to make any program like this successful.

### Major Research Questions

- 1) What is the background of the “No Person Left Behind” Pilot Program?
- 2) How will it benefit the community and the state of Florida?
- 3) What are the Pro’s and Con’s to this program?
- 4) Who are the political leaders involved?
- 5) What is the cost to the taxpayers?
- 6) What are the personal observations of the writer?

### Research Outcomes

A lot of Floridians have become fearful of natural disasters, especially people with disabilities because they feel that they are not adequately prepared for a natural disaster. Linda Carter, the director for the “No Person Left Behind” pilot program has observed a lot of problems that have stemmed from this and she has noted them in her project because over time they will become significant. Some of the problems that have been observed are as followed:

- 1) More than one-third of Florida’s 6,341,130 households have at least one person with a disability,
- 2) Over the last two years, multiple hurricane threats in various counties, lead to the need of being prepared for any type of disaster,
- 3) Special needs shelters lack specialized care for emergency preparedness, so people with disabilities fear going,
- 4) And also people became more fearful after the devastation Hurricane Katrina caused in Louisiana and Mississippi (Linda Carter, personal interview).

The “No Person Left Behind” pilot program began with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory Board of Southwest Florida. The reason why this board came up with this pilot program is because these people work with people with disabilities on a day-to-day basis and this is something that is needed in this area. Under the guidelines that have been set forth by the ADA Advisory Board of Southwest Florida, this pilot program has been operational for a little over twenty months.

Besides being operational here in southwest Florida, it has been considered as a model program for the state of Florida but it also has many goals that need to be achieved. For one, this program is still pending before the state legislature because of the communication barrier but also because of the funding issues in the state of Florida. Because communication is key, this program is based on communication and it will not back down from being heard by the local, state, and federal government on the significance of this pilot program. One goal in particular that needs to be achieved is that communication with a coalition of agencies including the local Emergency Operations Center to include all types of disabilities.

The above goal is very important because disabled people are everywhere and they will continue to be citizens no matter what. This means that what they say, we as Americans also have to take that into consideration because they too have concerns for natural disasters, and even though they are unable to help physically, they can help with phones and they also need help themselves. Other goals that this pilot program wants to achieve are as followed:

- 1) Establishing a centralized website, <http://www.nopersonleftbehind.org>, for information and links to resources including the Southwest Florida ADA website, <http://www.adaboardswfl.org>,
- 2) 100 percent accountability of all pre-registered persons with disabilities during disasters,
- 3) And lastly, educate people with disabilities and their families on disaster preparedness and empowerment to take control of their disaster planning (Linda Carter, personal interview).

Besides having goals, the pilot program has had the generosity of other agencies to voluntarily help. Linda Carter says, that without the help of these agencies this pilot program would not be possible. Some of the agencies that have voluntarily helped this pilot program include:

- 1) ADA Advisory Board of Southwest Florida,
- 2) Career and Service Center of Lee County,
- 3) Lee County Center for Independent Living,
- 4) Deaf Service Center of Southwest Florida,
- 5) Division of Blind Services,
- 6) WGPU-Florida Gulf Coast University,
- 7) WINK-TV (Fort Myers),
- 8) Visually Impaired Persons Center of Southwest Florida,
- 9) Lee County Emergency Management and many others (Linda Carter, personal interview).

A lot of the agencies above that have volunteered their time and effort deal with people with disabilities on a day-to-day basis. Not only do they provide tools for everyday living but they also provide the tools to make living easier for these people. For example, the Division of Blind Services deals with people who are legally blind and visually impaired. They provide Braille format of publications and they provide the tools and resources that these people who are visually impaired need. According to Kim McGrail who recently became visually impaired, this takes a load off of her and it has really calmed her fears for hurricane season and its outcomes (personal interview, August 7, 2006).

Another big contribution that this pilot program has given to the community is the Federal Emergency Management Agency materials that are not only in regular print, but they are catered to those with disabilities. For example, some of the publications are offered in other forms like being on tape, in Braille, in large print, or also in electronic formats so that they can be enlarged. This is very important because as people get older they lose some of their eyesight and they must rely on other resources and tools to get them prepared for natural disasters but also matters within everyday life.

In the state of Florida, most pilot programs as they go through the process of becoming funded by the state or a sponsored agency, they must examine a statewide solution that can be implemented from anywhere at anytime. Some of the statewide-proposed solutions that the ADA Board of Southwest Florida has come up with and has approved have been a dedicated staff and state office. This is significant because once you have a dedicated office and staff, then goals will start to be achieved and the purpose and mission of the organization will also come into play.

Besides having a dedicated staff and state office, there is also a need for a dedicated public communication channel for persons with disabilities. This too is very important because even if one cannot hear they can see what is happening, but also if someone cannot see, they can hear what is happening. Along with having both of these statewide solutions, others include:

- 1) The development of a common template for pre-registration and the identification of persons with special needs,



- 2) Establish links from the database to the Emergency Operations Centers to use for mass care and evacuation planning, and search and rescue in the event of a disaster,
- 3) Develop recommendations for health care facilities (acute, long-term, and disaster) to use to advance their preparedness in supporting persons with disabilities,
- 4) And lastly, work with the media to include information to support persons with special needs before, during, and after disaster events ([www.nopersonleftbehind.org](http://www.nopersonleftbehind.org)).

The reason that the “No Person Left Behind” pilot program became about was that in 2005 when Hurricane Charley hit southwest Florida, it damaged the VIP center in Port Charlotte and that center is now non-operational and after the hurricane, for several days the people that were visually impaired in Charlotte County could not be contacted and this became a major challenge. Once that became a major issue, other hurricane issues began to arise and that lead to many other reasons why a program like this is needed. For example, eight weeks after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, CBS News reported that families, whose family members with disabilities had been flown out of New Orleans, could not get the status or location of their family member with the disability; in other words, they were lost.

Besides having the above as challenges, the information that was being distributed to the general population could not and was not being distributed to those with disabilities, because when the power goes out, the only news that is on, is the portable television or radio and the hearing impaired cannot hear it. Hearing impaired people

cannot even use TTY communications because those types of devices require electricity and when power goes out, that cuts out the communication channel for those people. Along with the TTY devices not being able to be used, people who use powered devices also had no way to recharge them and shelter staff were not properly trained to deal with people with disabilities.

Keeping the above information in mind, there are many pros and cons to this pilot program that also deals with the benefits to the community and also the state of Florida. The pros and cons are listed below in the follow table.

|      |   |
|------|---|
| Pros | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Effective in accountability for disabled,</li><li>• Will save time in long-run, once fully operational,</li><li>• Community will also have an emergency disaster plan in place,</li><li>• Information “hotspot” for all people.</li></ul> |
| Cons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Time to setup operation may take longer than expected,</li><li>• Funding is not there,</li><li>• Not everyone is interested,</li><li>• Man hours and staff is not hired yet.</li></ul>  |

Table 1-1. Pro’s and Con’s of the “No Person Left Behind” Pilot Program

Besides having pro’s and con’s of the “No Person Left Behind” pilot program, it really benefits the community and the state of Florida. For one, even though it is not a complete safeguard against hurricane preparedness and natural disasters, having an

emergency disaster plan in place will help ease fears so that people will remain calmer during the storm and the recovery process. Second, this program provides the resources to the state and community at both levels so that they have information readily available for disaster planning and also for the recovery process and anything else that goes along those lines.

The one major benefit to the community and also to the state of Florida is the fact that the cost is little compared to other programs that have been started and never followed through. This program will cost very little to the taxpayers, because everything will be based on donations and these donations will be tax-deductible. According to Mike Scott (personal interview), having a program like this will help cut down on time for search and rescue, if we have a centralized database for the disabled. Scott backs this program up one hundred percent because this program will take its money from community outreach resources, but also local, state, and federally funded grants. Besides having to pay for the program, the one great thing about this, is that the staff will be fifty percent volunteer because this is what makes this program resourceful and well worth it. The complete operating budget and personnel classification can be found in Appendix B and Appendix C.

Every program has some political leaders involved. A lot of the political leaders that are involved in this program support it one hundred percent because they see a growing need for something like this in this area. One leader in particular, who is very well known in this area of Florida because of his political contributions, is Commissioner John Albion who serves in District 5. He gives one hundred percent support, because Southwest Florida is mostly populated with senior citizens and disabled veterans.

Keeping this in mind, this area of Florida is well known for retirement and retirees so protecting these people who help fund these types of services is an important priority that cannot be put aside for another moment. Another really important thing that Commissioner Albion wants to make clear is that we must act now, before we have another disaster like Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. It is everyone's responsibility to work together not just the individual's.

Even though there are two people in really high positions in Lee County that support this program and its resources, Lt. Governor Toni Jennings believes that there is not enough funding and recently there have been some budget cuts in the state of Florida. People who support this program must raise enough support in the senate to get this program statewide and doing this, this program needs enough political supporters to back up this project like:

- 1) John Albion (personal interview, July 24, 2006)
- 2) Mike Scott (personal interview, July 24, 2006)
- 3) And Lt. Governor Toni Jennings (email to her executive assistant, July 25, 2006).

Some political leaders oppose this program because they see that other areas still need attention, but also because it does not directly concern them. One person in particular is Charlie Christ who is running for Governor for the state of Florida. He believes in education, but only for school children and he wants to put his priority on that. A lot of the media is gaining ground on him for this, because the "No Person Left Behind" pilot program will make a big impact and a big change in the way Florida prepares and recovers for and after a hurricane. Being prepared is a major issue and

having something like this in place looks promising so that it will help more people survive and it will also bring everyone together.

As the writer examined this pilot program and all of its benefits, she found it to be really magnificent for an idea and she is will to give her support because it will not only benefit people now but also in the future. The one thing that really got her motivated about this program, is that the county agencies that were and are still trying to help, did not have the appropriate tools and since then have been redirected to this program. Another thing that she noticed, was that the Federal Emergency Management Agency publications cont not be read due to print size, because it was too small for the visually impaired, she decided to find out if there are other sources of this information; Linda Carter redirected her to her program because they are available, people just have to ask. Along with that there have been no translators for the hearing impaired, but this is something that is being worked on over time.

Along with the writer's personal observations, in another interview with Linda Carter, she took many steps to get where she is at with the program today. The steps are outlined below:

- 1) 2004 began to gather information,
- 2) Created a plan for correcting the problems that had been identified,
- 3) Created a registration form and processing procedure so that she can account for everyone who registers,
- 4) Contact FEMA Publications Supply Center to order the literature for emergency preparedness in alternate formats,

- 5) During Hurricane Wilma was able to call and account for everyone who was registered at that time,
- 6) And currently, she is promoting the program through the local media to gain more support.

Knowing the steps that it takes to get this program underway helps make a difference in those who are affected and really think about if this is all about funding or having a need for a program like this. As you can see, this program is very simple in what it really is about, but people make it more complex that it really is. Keeping this in mind, in the last section of this paper, the writer will come to her conclusions and she will examine where to go now.

## Conclusions

As you can see, a lot of information has been presented about the “No Person Left Behind” pilot program including its benefits to the community and also to the state of Florida. Because this program is still pending before the Florida legislature, a lot of the funding for this program will have to come by donations and grants. Once the Florida Senate approves this program, then this program will be on the road to success. It is very important that as Americans and as Floridians, that we take care of the people that serve us most, and those people are our neighbors.

Besides being just a program to help people, it will really benefit and help everyone. Once something like this takes effect and becomes the model, then other states and communities will look at this and they too will become prepared for any type of disaster, because they too will have all the resources and tools that they need to be ready. In conclusion, it does not matter what it takes to get it approved, the “No Person Left Behind” pilot program and the ADA Board of Southwest Florida will continue to work together, to make this program a success and to let people know that emergency preparedness is key to living in the state of Florida.

## References

ADA Board of Southwest Florida. (2006). *ADA Board of Southwest Florida Website*.

Information retrieved on July 28, 2006 from <http://www.adaboardswfl.org/>.

Albion, John. (2006). County Commissioner, District 5. Personal Interview on July 24, 2006 about the No Person Left Behind Pilot Program.

Cantrell, Marsha. (2006). Executive Assistant to Lt. Governor Toni Jennings. Email Correspondence about the No Person Left Behind Pilot Program on July 26, 2006.

Carter, Linda. (2006). Personal Interview on July 24, 2006 about ADA Board and No Person Left Behind Pilot Program.

Federal Alliance for Safe Homes. (2006). *Flash Website*. Information retrieved on July 29, 2006 from <http://www.flash.org/activity.cfm?currentPeril=1>.

Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2006). *FEMA website*. Information retrieved on July 28, 2006 from <http://www.fema.gov/hazard/hurricane/index.shtm>.

Hartman, Barbara. (2006). Agency for Workforce Innovation. Email correspondence about the No Person Left Behind Pilot Program on July 25, 2006.

James, Lynn. (2006). Parent of a physically challenged child. Personal interview about the No Person Left Behind Pilot Program on June 28, 2006.

McGrail, Kim. (2006). Recently diagnosed to be visually impaired. Personal interview on August 7, 2006 about her view on the No Person Left Behind Pilot Program.

No Person Left Behind. (2006). *No Person Left Behind Website*. Information retrieved on July 24, 2006 and August 7, 2006 from <http://www.adaboardswfl.org/hurricane/hurricane.htm>.



- Russell, M. Ed.D. MSN. (2006). Boca Raton Community Hospital. Email correspondence about the No Person Left Behind Pilot Program on July 25, 2006.
- Scott, Mike. (2006). Sheriff of Lee County. Personal Interview on July 24, 2006 about the No Person Left Behind Pilot Program.

Appendix A

**Permission to Use ADA Information**

I, *Linda R. Carter*, give Allison Carter a student at International College in Fort Myers, Florida, permission to copy my work due to the importance of the “No Person Left Behind” Pilot Program. The portions she has been granted permission to use and copy are as followed:

- 1) The executive summary,
- 2) Background information of the pilot program,
- 3) Mission statement,
- 4) Goals of the project and program,
- 5) And performance objectives.

Thank you for you continued support and dedication.

Sincerely,

**Electronically signed and signature is on file.**

Linda Carter, Chairperson  
“No Person Left Behind” Project  
ADA Advisory Board of Southwest Florida  
704 Homer Ave North  
Lehigh Acres, Florida 33971-1142  
239-368-6846 (H); 239-826-8696 (Cell)  
[mslindacarter@comcast.net](mailto:mslindacarter@comcast.net)  
[MsLinda@adaboardswfl.org](mailto:MsLinda@adaboardswfl.org)  
[www.nopersonleftbehind.org](http://www.nopersonleftbehind.org)  
[www.adaboardswfl.org](http://www.adaboardswfl.org)

## Appendix B

**Operating Budget for No Person Left Behind Pilot Program**Appropriation Statement:

|  | <u>2007 Appropriations</u>                    | <u>2008 Allowances</u>                     |
|--|---|--|
| Number of Authorized Positions:        | 313   | 313  |
| <hr/>                                  |   |  |
| 01. Salaries, Wages, & Fringe Benefits | \$8,810,880.00                                | \$8,810,880.00                             |
| 02. FEMA Based Materials               | \$0 charge                                    | \$0 charge                                 |
| 03. Supplies & Materials (office)      | \$50,000                                      | \$50,000                                   |
| 04. Travel Expenses                    | \$10,000                                      | \$10,000                                   |
| 05. Computer Needs (Startup)           | \$75, 816.48                                  | \$0 charge                                 |
| -Maintenance                           | \$0   | \$10,000                                   |
| -Adobe Work Flow Program               | \$115,000                                     | \$20,000                                   |
| -Extension Server                      | \$6,375.00                                    | \$1,300                                    |
| -Documents Security Server             | \$200,000                                     | \$25,000                                   |
| -NXT communicator                      | \$109,295.00                                  | \$0 charge                                 |
| -Maintenance                           | \$0 charge                                    | \$3,500                                    |
| <hr/>                                  |   |  |
| Complete Operating Budget              | <b>\$9,377,366.40</b><br>(Startup Costs/1 yr) | <b>\$8,930,680</b><br>(2 <sup>nd</sup> Yr) |

Appendix C  
**Personnel By Classification (Projected/Assumed)**

| <u>Class Title</u>                     | <u>FY2007 Positions</u> | <u>FY 2007 Allowance</u> |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Executive Director (HQ)                | 1                       | \$57,200                 |
| Assistant Executive Director (HQ)      | 1                       | \$52,000                 |
| Secretary (HQ)                         | 1                       | \$31,200                 |
| Accountant (HQ)                        | 1                       | \$35,360                 |
| Public Relations Specialist (HQ)       | 1                       | \$35,360                 |
| IT Manager (HQ)                        | 1                       | \$35,360                 |
| Information Data Specialist (HQ)       | 7                       | \$160,160                |
| Director (Regional)                    | 8                       | \$374,400                |
| Secretary (Regional)                   | 8                       | \$208,000                |
| Information Data Specialist (Regional) | 16                      | \$366,080                |
| Directory (County)                     | 67                      | \$2,787,200              |
| Secretary (County)                     | 67                      | \$1,602,640              |
| Information Data Specialist (County)   | 134                     | \$3,065,920              |
| Total:                                 | <b>313</b>              | <b>\$8,819,880</b>       |