

For Immediate Release
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**NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT KICKS OFF NATIONAL
PREPAREDNESS MONTH WITH SENIORS READYFEST**

Festival helps older adults prepare for emergencies

Debuts new [videos](#) to help prepare people with disabilities and access and functional needs

September 5, 2018 — September is National Preparedness Month and the New York City Emergency Management Department wants New Yorkers to take the opportunity to plan for emergencies. Today, NYC Emergency Management kicked off the month with “*Seniors ReadyFest*,” a festival to help inform older adults on the importance of being prepared. The department also introduced two new public service announcement videos (PSAs) that highlight steps people with disabilities and access and functional needs can take to prepare. The event was hosted at Southbridge Towers in Lower Manhattan.

“During an emergency, winging it is not an option. National Preparedness Month reminds us to make a plan,” said **NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito**. “I encourage all New Yorkers to take the time to learn how they can prepare before a disaster strikes.”

“We need to change the way we think about disasters and emergencies, making preparedness actions part of our daily routine, and learning critical response skills,” said **Regional Administrator of FEMA Region II Thomas Von Essen**. “We do not know when disasters will strike, but we can prepare for them.”

As a part of *Seniors ReadyFest*, NYC Emergency Management staff members were on hand to distribute a range of emergency preparedness materials. Residents learned steps to make a plan, gather supplies, and stay informed. Other activities included disaster-themed “Jeopardy,” “Name That Tune,” and “Spin the Wheel.” Representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), NYPD Community Affairs, FDNY, Department for the Aging, Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, and Consolidated Edison were also on hand to distribute preparedness material and free giveaways.

“Emergencies can lead to life-threatening situations, especially for vulnerable older New Yorkers,” said **Department for the Aging Commissioner Donna Corrado**. “DFTA prepares seniors for crises by helping them create emergency plans at senior centers, naturally occurring retirement communities, and religious institutions. Given the right resources, New Yorkers can handle anything.”

“Preparedness is a cornerstone of the FDNY as members train and plan rigorously to answer more than 1.7 million calls for help every year to keep New Yorkers safe,” said **Fire**

Commissioner Daniel A. Nigro. “We urge everyone to learn safety tips this month to use all year round, from having a working smoke alarm to closing the door when escaping a fire.”

New York City Emergency Management also introduced two new PSAs that highlight the importance of emergency preparedness, specifically for people with access and functional needs. These videos are a part of Ready New York’s “What’s Your Plan?” video series, which depicts New Yorkers faced with emergency scenarios, and underscore why it is important to make a plan. The new short films — “Caught Off-Guard” and “Prepared for the Worst” specifically address planning steps and resources designed to help people with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs, prepare for emergencies. The short films are available with audio descriptions and in American Sign Language, Spanish, Chinese, and Russian with voiceover and subtitles. NYC Emergency Management developed the videos with Next Millennium Productions, which produced the first installments of the Ready New York’s “What’s Your Plan?” video series in 2014. [Click here](#) to view the new videos, or visit NYC Emergency Management’s [YouTube channel](#).

“National Preparedness Month provides everyone with the opportunity to plan for all types of emergencies by creating a personalized checklist of what is needed when the time comes,” said **Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities Commissioner Victor Calise.** “I urge everyone to view NYC Emergency Management’s two new PSAs “Caught Off-Guard” and “Prepared for the Worst,” which provide essential planning steps and resources for people with disabilities.”

“We are delighted to work with NYC Emergency Management, and some amazing actors to highlight the challenges faced by the City’s residents with disabilities during an emergency,” said **Elsa Lai, Principal at Next Millennium Productions,** executive producer of the videos. “As lifelong New Yorkers who have lived through a number of city-wide emergencies, we hope that these videos will encourage residents to be pro-active in their preparations – simple things that can help make a difficult situation easier or can even save a life.”

“The best way to stay safe is to be prepared for emergencies before they arise,” said **Matthew Sniffen, Con Edison’s vice president for Emergency Preparedness.** “We want New Yorkers to know what to do when they sense danger, such as if they suspect a natural gas odor or see downed wires. Leave the area and call your utility or 911 if you think you may smell gas and never touch downed wires.”

About Next Millennium Productions

Established in 1997, Next Millennium Productions (NMP) is a minority and women-owned creative video workshop based out of a boutique studio in SoHo. Our award-winning team includes storytellers, technical experts and audio-visual artists who share the love of creating great content. A fixture of the Lower Manhattan business community for 20 years, NMP is committed to creating content that serves, entertains, and informs fellow New Yorkers, and to supporting them through volunteer work and donations to numerous local organizations.

About National Preparedness Month

National Preparedness Month reminds individuals to prepare themselves and families now and throughout the year. This month focuses on planning, with an overarching theme: *Disasters Happen. Prepare Now. Learn How.* It is divided into four weekly themes: *Make and Practice a Plan, Learn Life Saving Skills, Check Your Insurance Coverage, and Save for an Emergency.* During the month, NYC Emergency Management will team up with City agencies and community partners to organize and promote a number of events for the entire family, including children, older adults, and pets, as well as steps New Yorkers and their communities can take to be ready. For more information and resources about National Preparedness Month, including a calendar of events, visit NYC.gov/emergencymanagement and www.ready.gov/september.

NYC Emergency Management ‘Prep Talk’ Podcast Series:

Get ready for your emergency prep talk! NYC Emergency Management has launched “Prep Talk,” a new podcast series that engages listeners about emergency management topics. In the latest episode, hosts Omar Bourne and Allison Pennisi, sat down with Iskra Killgore, director of community engagement and language access at NYC Emergency Management, to discuss National Preparedness Month, the importance of preparing New Yorkers before emergencies, along with a number of preparedness events planned throughout the City during the month. You can listen to “Prep Talk” on [SoundCloud](#) and [iTunes](#), and [subscribe now](#) to stay up-to-date on the latest episodes.

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