

August 31, 2022

Sherman Gillums, Director  
Office on Disability Integration and Coordination  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C St., SW  
Washington D.C. 20024

Dear Director Gillums:

The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) writes to congratulate you on your appointment as director of the Office on Disability Integration and Coordination (ODIC) with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). We appreciate your ongoing commitment to the civil rights of Americans with disabilities. NDRN is excited to work with you in the upcoming months and years to serve individuals with disabilities during disasters.

NDRN is the non-profit membership association of Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agencies located in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the United States Territories. In addition, there is a P&A affiliated with the Native American Consortium which includes the Hopi, Navajo and San Juan Southern Paiute Nations in the Four Corners region of the Southwest. P&A agencies are authorized under various federal statutes to provide legal representation and related advocacy services, and to investigate abuse and neglect of individuals with disabilities in a variety of settings. The P&A Network comprises the nation's largest provider of legally based advocacy services for persons with disabilities.

Your background illustrates a firm commitment to promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. Often, people with disabilities are left out of emergency preparedness processes, which then leaves them vulnerable during an actual disaster. The consequences of such under preparedness have been devastating. P&A agencies have a collaborative history with FEMA when dealing with the catastrophic results of disasters like Hurricane Katrina. Previously, FEMA has developed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between FEMA and NDRN.

We look forward to working with you and FEMA to strengthen emergency preparedness practices to make people with disabilities more resilient during natural and man-made disasters. Your past leadership with reputable, national disability organizations like the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) illustrates your commitment to these issues.

We would once again like to congratulate you for your appointment. We are excited to work with you moving forward. We would like to find a time for NDRN leadership to meet with you and discuss how NDRN, the P&A Network and FEMA could work more closely together to better the lives of people with disabilities during a disaster. Please reach out to Claire Stanley at [Claire.stanley@ndrn.org](mailto:Claire.stanley@ndrn.org) to schedule a meeting.

Sincerely,



Eric Buehlmann  
Deputy Executive Director for Public Policy  
National Disability Rights Network