

Functional Assessment Service Team (FAST)

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: What is FAST? Who is on FAST? Where are they? What are the qualifications for FAST?

Answer: In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, it became clear that the same potential for a catastrophic disaster existed in California and that preparation to shelter thousands of disaster victims was insufficient in this state. Preparation and planning, in particular for sheltering People with Disabilities and Elderly (PWD/E), needed to be improved.

After a 2 year planning period, a planning team made up of representatives from state and county government, as well as Private Non Profit (PNP) and community-based organizations (CBOs) developed the concept of the Functional Assessment Service Team (FAST). The purpose of the FAST program is to provide staff to conduct functional assessments of PWD/E as they arrive at general population shelters, so they can remain at the site. FAST will be deployed as shelters are opened and remain in the shelters until it is determined that they are no longer needed. FAST may transfer to other shelters and will return to shelters as needed or requested.

FAST make-up, responsibilities and qualifications

A FAST consists of trained government employees and CBO personnel ready to respond and deploy to disaster areas to work in shelters. FAST will work side by side with shelter personnel and other emergency response workers to assist in identifying and meeting essential functional needs so PWD/E can maintain their health, safety and independence during disasters.

FAST will act to get durable medical equipment (DME), consumable medical supplies (CMS), prescribed medications or a person to assist with essential activities of daily living.

FAST members will possess the knowledge, skills and ability to work in their area of disability expertise, as well as a minimum of two years' experience working with and assessing the needs of these populations.

FAST will consist of members with experience in the following areas:

- Aging (services/supports, including dietary needs)
- Chronic health conditions
- Developmental & other cognitive disabilities (i.e. Traumatic Brain Injury, intellectual)
- Hearing loss
- Mental health disabilities
- Physical disabilities
- Substance abuse
- Vision loss

Question: Do I get paid while on FAST and what if I get injured or injure someone while performing FAST duties?

Answer: CDSS is working with state departments that oversee contracts with local entities (Regional Centers, Independent Living Centers, Area Agency on Aging, etc.) so that those state departments can develop agreements that will allow the state departments to recoup costs related to disasters. After these agreements are in place and if all the other requirements are met for reimbursement (i.e. federal or state declaration of emergency), the local entities could get reimbursed for expenses related to deployment of FAST, i.e. overtime, travel, etc. Based on your position or agreement with your employer, you could be paid for overtime and costs related to FAST duties. Other considerations will be terms of any existing bargaining agreement and other factors that will enable a person to be paid for overtime.

CDSS is has gotten a legal ruling regarding liability for FAST members who are performing FAST related duties. The legal issues related to performing FAST duties would be the same as the legal issues related to you performing normal duties at your normal work place. Your employer could be incurring liabilities when you are deployed as a FAST member.

Question: How long and where will I work if I get assigned to FAST?

Answer: FAST deployments will normally be 10-15 days, or duration of the disaster if less. If you are a member of a county team, you will most likely be deployed only within the county that you work in, unless the disaster is catastrophic in nature. If you are a member of a state FAST, you could be deployed anywhere in the state.

Question: How will I be trained for FAST duties?

Answer: FAST training will be held in May and June at three locations in the state. Refer to the CalEMA CSTI website for details about the training.

Question: Do I have to sign an agreement to be on FAST?

Answer: At this time there are no plans of agreements that FAST members would have to sign with CDSS or CalEMA. If your employer requires an agreement, that will be at their discretion.