



## Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 600,000 families in Georgia have a family member with a disability. By evaluating personal needs and tailoring an emergency plan to fit those needs, persons with special needs and their caregivers can be better prepared when disaster strikes.

### **In addition to assembling your basic Ready kit, consider the following:**

- Create a support network to help in an emergency, and tell these people where you keep your emergency supplies.
- Give one member of your support network a key to your house or apartment.
- Contact your city or county government's emergency management office. Many local offices keep lists of people with disabilities so they can be located quickly in a sudden emergency.
- Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to help identify your disability.
- If you are dependent on dialysis or other life-sustaining treatment, know the location and availability of more than one facility.
- If you have a wheelchair, show others how to operate it, and know its size and weight in case it has to be transported.
- If you have a communication-related disability, make sure your emergency information notes the best way to communicate with you.
- Keep extra prescription medicines on hand.
- In a waterproof container in your Ready kit, store:
  - A list of all your medications including dosage, and a list of any allergies
  - Extra eyeglasses, hearing aid batteries, wheelchair batteries and oxygen
  - A list of the style and serial number of medical devices
  - Medical insurance information and Medicare cards
  - A list of doctors, relatives or friends who should be notified if you are hurt
- Make plans for your service animals or pets. Most shelters accept service animals, but not all shelters accept pets, so plan in advance for shelter alternatives that will work for both you and your animal.
  - Consider loved ones or friends outside of your immediate area who would be willing to host you and your pets in an emergency.
  - Have a Ready kit prepared for your service animal or pet as well, including food, water, carrier or leash, medicines and veterinarian's contact information.