

Fact Sheet

Kentucky Outreach and Information Network (KOIN)

What is the Kentucky Outreach and Information Network (KOIN)?



The Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services/Department for Public Health established the KOIN in 2004 as a response to the need for emergency readiness set by the state Commission of Public Health. The KOIN is a growing grassroots network of volunteers who serve as conduits of information in emergencies to people who are deaf/hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, limited English proficient, remote rural, elderly or disabled.

What is the purpose of the KOIN?

The purpose of the KOIN is to ensure that communication channels are in place so that the state's most vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations can receive critical health information.

Who participates in the KOIN?

The KOIN includes a variety of people who have the trust of many special population groups. KOIN members range from individual community members to people who represent the following groups:

- Disaster preparedness and emergency response agencies;
- Direct service providers;
- First responders (fire, police);
- Social and cultural service organizations;
- Community-based organizations;
- Faith organizations;
- Health departments;
- Mainstream and ethnic media outlets; and
- Hospitals.

How was the KOIN formed?

The KOIN was formed from studies and interviews with individuals, agencies, media and institutions that could assist CHFS/DPH in defining communication patterns among the state's special populations and developing the best methods to reach them. Over time, the KOIN has developed and grown through forming partnerships with people who can reach the state's most vulnerable people and recommend others for the KOIN.

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Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Division of Communications
275 East Main Street, 4C-A Frankfort, KY 40621
(502) 564-6786
<http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/epi/preparedness/KOIN.htm>

When is the KOIN used?

The KOIN is used to issue urgent and non-urgent information about natural disasters, and severe weather events, disease outbreaks, product contamination and other events that can impact the health and safety of Kentucky citizens.

What makes the KOIN different from other communication channels?

The KOIN is unique because it takes into account the different ways in which people receive information and the communication barriers that may prevent people from receiving information.

How is the KOIN database maintained and kept up-to-date?

The list of KOIN members is maintained on a simple database spreadsheet. The database includes distribution lists according to specific population segments and particular locations throughout the state so that certain groups can be reached through e-mail. KOIN members without e-mail addresses are reached via telephone or by word of mouth. KOIN updates are conducted annually to verify the most current contact information is included.

What types of activities and materials are available to KOIN members?

KOIN members can access a variety of resources and materials, including:

- Brochures;
- Guides for community members and the media;
- KOIN Newsletter (quarterly);
- Folding Community Information Pocket Guide Card;
- KOIN Training Video; and
- Refrigerator magnet.

These materials are available through the KOIN Web site:

<http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/epi/preparedness/KOIN.htm>. Other activities, such as meetings and workshops, are held annually to reinforce KOIN members' roles and encourage potential members to join the network.

For more information about the KOIN, please contact:

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