Whole Community Planning - Changing the EM Paradigm

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EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Presented By;

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Defining the Need

"Government can and will continue to serve disaster survivors. However, we fully recognize that a government-centric approach to disaster management will not be enough to meet the challenges posed by a catastrophic incident. That is why we must fully engage our entire societal capacity...."

Administrator Craig Fugate, FEMA, 2011, before the United States House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management

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Whole Community Defined

Means by which residents, emergency management practitioners, organizational and community leaders, and government officials can collectively understand and assess the needs of their respective communities and determine the best ways to organize and strengthen their assets, capacities, and interests

A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management: Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action , FEMA 2011

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Purpose of Whole Community Planning Approach

- To engage the full capacity of the private and nonprofit sectors, including businesses, faith-based and disability organizations, and the general public, in conjunction with the participation of local, tribal, state, territorial, and Federal governmental partners

- To build a system that encourages individuals, families, communities, states, and the private sector to all participate in building resiliency and capacity

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Benefits Include:

- Shared understanding of community needs and capabilities
- Greater empowerment and integration of resources from across the community
- Stronger social infrastructure
- Establishment of relationships that facilitate more effective prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery activities
- Increased individual and collective preparedness
- Greater resiliency at both the community and national levels

Why the Change?

- Scale and severity of natural disasters
- Change is demographic trends
- Growing number of people living at home with disabilities, chronic illnesses
- Growing senior population
- Cultural diversity increasing as immigrant population grows
- Employment trends shifting the home to work commuting patterns

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Lessons Learned from Katrina

- Federal response should better integrate the contributions of volunteers and nongovernmental organizations into the broader national effort
- Integration would be best achieved at the state and local levels, prior to future incidents
- Individuals in the community know what works best for them

The Challenge

- Understanding how to work with the diversity of groups and organizations and the policies and practices that emerge from them in an effort to improve the ability of local residents to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from any type of event

- Changing how Emergency Managers perceive their role in emergency management

Whole Community Principles

- Understand and meet the actual needs of the whole community

- Engage and empower all parts of the community

- Strengthen what works well in communities on a daily basis

Different Types of Communities

- Communities of place
- Communities of interest
- Communities of belief
- Communities of circumstance,
- Can exist both geographically and virtually

Strategic Themes

- Understand community complexity
- Recognize community capabilities and needs
- Foster relationships with community leaders
- Build and maintain partnerships
- Empower local action
- Leverage and strengthen social infrastructure, networks, and assets

Understanding Community Complexity

- Understand community demographics
- How social activity is organized on a normal basis (e.g., social patterns, community leaders, points of collective organization and action, and decision-making processes)
- Helps with tailoring engagement strategies and shaping programs to meet various needs

Recognize Community Capabilities and Needs

- Defined on the basis of what the community requires without being limited to what traditional emergency management capabilities can address

- Identify the actual needs of the community and the collective capabilities (private, public, and civic) that exist to address them

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Foster Relationships with Community Leaders

- Help identify activities in which the community is already interested and involved
- Help emergency managers in identifying the changing needs and capabilities that exist in the community
- Rally their members to join community emergency management efforts and to take personal preparedness measures for themselves and their families
- Can be a critical link between emergency managers and the individuals they represent

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Build and Maintain Partnerships

- Provides greater opportunities to reach agreement throughout the community

- Influence others to participate and support activities.

- Find the overlapping and shared interests around which groups and organizations are brought together

- Sustain the motivations and incentives to collaborate over a long period of time

Empower Local Action

- Allowing members of the communities to lead—not follow—in identifying priorities, organizing support, implementing programs, and evaluating outcomes.

- Encouraging communities to own and lead their own resilience activities

- Empower them to draw on their full potential in developing collective actions and solutions

- Especially important in rural communities where there tends to be less infrastructure

Leverage and strengthen Social Infrastructure, Networks, and Assets

- Investing in the social, economic, and political structures that make up daily life and connecting them to emergency management programs

- Participating in decision-making processes that govern local residents under normal conditions

- Promote a culture of shared responsibility and decision making

- Align emergency management activities to support the institutions, assets, and networks that people turn to in order to solve problems on a daily basis

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Potential Partners

- Volunteer organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Individual citizens
- Community leaders Disability services
- School boards
- Higher education institutions
- Local Cooperative Extension System offices
- Animal control agencies and animal welfare organizations
- Supply/hardware stores
- Big-box stores
- Small, local retailers
- Nonprofit organizations
- Advocacy groups

- Supply chain components, such as manufacturers, distributors, suppliers, and logistics providers
- Home care services
- Medical facilities
- Government agencies (all levels and disciplines)
- Embassies/military bases
- Local Planning Councils (e.g., Citizen Corps Councils, Local Emergency Planning Committees)
- Chambers of commerce
- Media outlets
- Airports
- Public transportation systems
- Utility providers
- And many others…

How Can We Better Understand the Actual Needs of the Community?

- Educate your emergency management staff on the diversity of the community and implement cultural competence interventions

- Learn the demographics of your community. Develop strategies to reach community members and engage them in issues that are important to them.

- Know the languages and communication methods/traditions in the community—not only what languages people speak and understand, but how they actually exchange new information and which information sources they trust.

- Know where the real conversations and decisions are made. (community center, neighborhood block parties, social clubs, or places of worship).

- Identify a broad base of stakeholders

How Do We Effectively Engage the Whole Community?

- Reach to your Citizen Corps Council (or similar organization) to inquire about groups that are currently involved in emergency planning, or groups that should be
- Maintain ongoing, clear, and consistent communication with all segments of the community by using vocabulary that is understood and known by those members.
- Discuss how organizations can have a role in the community's emergency plan and, when feasible, include them in training activities and exercises.
- Use the power of social media applications to disseminate messages, create two-way information exchanges
- Develop recovery plans with participation and partnership within the full fabric of the community.
- Incorporate emergency planning discussions into the existing format of community meetings.
- Identify barriers to participation in emergency management meetings (e.g., lack of childcare services, access to transportation, meeting times) and provide solutions where feasible
- Consider physical, programmatic, and communication access needs of community members with disabilities when organizing community meetings.

How Do We Generate Public Interest in Disaster Preparedness?

- Integrate the public and community institutions into the planning process by hosting town hall meetings and by participating in non-emergency management community meetings.

- Make yourself available for local radio call-in programs to answer questions that callers have about emergency management and solicit input from the listeners on what they see as the top priorities for community resilience.

- Have an open house at your emergency operations center (EOC) and invite the public. Invite schools for field trips. Explain the equipment, organization, and coordination that are used to help protect the community

What Activities Can Emergency Managers Change/Create to Help Strengthen What Already Works Well?

- Understand how you can share and augment resources with partners within your community during emergencies
- Work with your partner organizations to better understand the various ways they will be able to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from threats
- Identify organizations that already provide support to the community and determine how you can supplement their efforts during times of disaster when there might be a greater need
- Leverage existing programs, (local Parent Teacher Association) to strengthen emergency management skills in the community
- Provide adequate information to organizations ahead of time so they can better prepare and respond. In return, organizations will provide you with information on their status and ability to assist when you need them
- Provide support to for-profit private sector organizations in the development of business continuity plans

Conclusion

- By focusing on core elements of successful, connected, and committed communities, emergency management can collectively achieve better outcomes in times of crisis, while enhancing resiliency

- This will require the emergency management community to transform the way the emergency management team thinks about, plans for, and responds to incidents in such a way to support community resilience

- Building community resilience in this manner requires emergency management practitioners to effectively engage with and holistically plan for the needs of the whole community. This includes but is not limited to accommodating people who speak languages other than English, those from diverse cultures or economic backgrounds, people of all ages, people with disabilities and other access and functional needs, and populations traditionally underrepresented in civic governance

Resources

FEMA

"A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management: Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action"

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Questions

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