

**Emergency Preparedness Initiative
June 29-30 State Coordinators Meeting
Atlanta, GA**

Participants:

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SESSION ONE: REFLECTING ON YOUR COMMUNITIES' DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS

Disadvantaged Groups

Commonly identified “disadvantaged” groups:

- Elderly, especially in rural areas*
- Non-English speaking
- Those with Physical and or mental disabilities*
- Homeless
- Lacking transportation
- Low education / illiterate
- Low income*
- Isolation*: social, cultural, and or physical/geographical
- Families with small children, especially single parents
- Those that refuse to take action
- Medical dependence (combined with physical disabilities)*
- Homebound
- Illegal immigrants

**Indicates groups most often identified as “disadvantaged.”*

Notes:

- Sometimes separating “at risk” and “disadvantaged is challenging.
- Levels of disadvantage is an important consideration (i.e. How low is the income? How severe the handicap? How old or dependent is the person?
- Multiple layers of disadvantaged magnified the problem (i.e. low income, illiterate, homebound all rolled into one person puts them at a greater disadvantage than a single factor.

**Disadvantaged Groups:
Positive and Negative Aspects of Awareness, Preparation, Response, and Recovery**

	Elderly	Low Income	Isolation: Social or Cultural	Disability: Physical, Mental, Medical Dependence
Awareness (+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust neighbors & friends Trust local institutions TV weatherman Sheriff's call system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aware of hurricanes Trust of local institutions (i.e. churches) Relied on Weather Channel for information Communication with neighbors & friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust of neighbors and friends Got news from various media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust of social service agencies Trust of "their" community
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No communication of plan No personal plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not aware of all hazards Communication of plan Do not know of plan Attitude that some else would take care of this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No communication of disaster plan Communication needs improvement Dominant source of info. Is TV, but not much coverage for specific rural areas 	No knowledge of plan
Preparation (+)	EM and CG willing to work together to make it better	EM and CG willing to work together to make it better		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registering special needs EM & CG are willing to work together to make it better
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No participation in planning EM & CG need to talk to each other Did not know of a plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did not know about a plan Did not participate in planning Not able to prepare/ not prepared Can't afford to stockpile supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did not participate in plan EM & CG need to talk to each other Did not know about a plan Not prepared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No communication of plan No participation in developing the plan. Very little consideration among EM group for disabled people EM & CG need to talk to each other Lack of shelter space
Response (+)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural communities tend to "take care of their own" EM & CG willing to work together to make it better Strong internal networks Sense of self-sufficiency improved recovery Ext. agents know rural areas and who needs help 	
		Slow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor communication between outside aid providers & those who are culturally isolated Didn't receive warnings in a timely fashion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low level of trust of EM/ Police/ Fire FEMA attitude viewed as negative
Recovery (+)			Isolated communities have their own survival and coping mechanisms/ rituals	
		Long term recovery very slow	Rural areas are less prepared for dealing with the aftermath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too many forms to fill out Rural areas are less likely to have power restored quickly

To What Extent Were the Things Noted in the Chart Above Affected by Rural Vs. Urban Locations?

Rural	Urban
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less attention is given to rural areas; tend to be neglected • Lack of financial resources • Higher social capital; more bonding (people helping people, know their neighbors) • Heavy equipment available (farmers) • Limited tax base • More prone to do for themselves • More barriers when living outside towns/cities (i.e. roads washed out). Distance and resources inhibits quick response. • Same people play multiple roles • Plans often created by regional entities not local people and groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More resources available (physical, financial, formal organizations) • Attitude of “who is going to do for me?” (vs. rural attitude of doing for myself) • Individuals are more isolated socially (may not know neighbors) • Many demands in a small geographic area – may have to wait for help • More formal organizations involved in planning and response • More formal “top-down” planning

What Worked Well in Past Disasters?

- Having a place where “trusted” people are present
- Communications among agencies
- Good coordination of formal Emergency Management organizations
- Advanced warning
- Mock exercises and drills
- Increased tracking of vulnerable populations
- BRACE example

What Needs Improvement?

- Better communication to public needed
- Coordination of grassroots/informal organizations is poor
- City-county coordination needs improvement
- Coordination between local organizations and national organizations (localized agencies need to maintain leadership) Develop positive vertical and horizontal relations.
- Coordination of donations and volunteers is needed
- Address needs of pets and livestock
- Keeping registry of special needs population up to date is a challenge (dialysis, oxygen, etc.)
- Open attitudes and skills of Emergency Management leadership – seek community input.
- Use social network links that exist (technology based, relationship based, etc. – whatever connects people to others around them)
- Streamline assistance process and paperwork – use a single system across agencies
- Increase training and education of individuals; use flexible timing and creative approaches; stress personal responsibility

SESSION TWO: KEY COMMUNITY ASSETS AND RESOURCES

Who did each group identify as resources that disadvantaged groups trusted?

Emergency Managers	Community Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire • Faith-based organizations • Emergency Management Agencies • Law enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire • Faith-based organizations (churches) • Emergency Management Agencies • Human service agencies (home health agencies) • Red Cross • Friends and neighbors

Note: While some common ground was identified, the group noted that there were considerable differences between the EM and CG groups on this question as seen in the matrix of state responses.

What Key Groups Are Currently Involved?

- Churches
- Emergency Management (fire, law enforcement, EMA)
- Red Cross
- People with a pulse on the community
- Health agencies
- Schools

What Key Groups Should Have Been Used But Were Not?

- Churches & faith-based organizations
- Trash companies – debris removal
- Private sector
- Civic organizations
- Extension
- Human service agencies
- Pet services/vets
- “Unique” groups (i.e. tribes, military, inmates)
- Grassroots organizations (ministerial alliances, neighborhood watch)
- Emergent groups
- Schools, community colleges, universities

SESSION THREE: EXAMINING THE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS DEMONSTRATION PROCESS

Emergency Preparedness Demonstration Process Feedback

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Group One: (Rachel's group)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good sequence of events/system • Liked mapping process (though noted that need to clearly define the community and make sure the right people are there) • Good if connected to the whole plan • Brings Community Group perspective to the process • Mobilizes more people • May be received best if marketed as a tool and clearly not criticism of existing efforts 	<p>Group One:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a step-by-step guide; curriculum and training needed • Communities need technical assistance for mapping • Funding is an issue – suggest that assistance be offered as a competitive grant to provide incentive and local “buy-in” • Keeping map updated may be a challenge. • Concern about getting community involvement • Caution to work with existing leadership – not come in as an “outside expert” • Start by building rapport with local leadership, communicate value to them first • Identify a local person as the key contact
<p>Group Two: (Molly's group)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves everyone • Is a process • Vulnerability mapping is good • Coaching is a good idea, but who? 	<p>Group Two:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to define community • Distribution of plan • How to pay for • How to keep up-to-date • Sustainability • Who <i>needs</i> to be at the table? • Good idea, but needs details
<p>Group Three: (Deborah's group)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good starting point • Involved new people, inclusive • Current plans not inclusive • Current plans not communicated • Current plans have nothing on agri-terrorism • Alleviates conflicts ahead of time • Coordination saves time and increases efficiency • Vulnerability mapping increases involvement • Increases horizontal linkages, especially at county level • Increases awareness (vulnerability, resources) 	<p>Group Three:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge to bring in new people • EM – too time consuming • EM - plans already in progress or in place (but still not communicated and/or generic) • Not as comprehensive • Getting community involved • Jurisdictional/agency conflicts • How to keep it updated • Costs • Some states have templates, and EPD process may disrupt

Coaching Feedback

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Group One:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liked having a guide • Facilitator/Mediator good • Education: must understand both technical aspect and process • Stern- able to drive process • Compassion – understand community concerns • Neutral – no political “baggage” • Ideal would be to team an outside coach with an inside facilitator • Coaches need experience • Trust is essential to success • Urban areas more receptive to coach as an outsider 	<p>Group One:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need clear definition of role and qualifications • Concern for local vs. outsider • Rural – concern for the time commitment involved • Funding – bigger concern in rural settings • May be a need to provide coach training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Skills ○ Process ○ Continuing education • Need to identify key traits/skills of successful coaches to use in identifying and training others for success
<p>Group Two:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps process on track • Need a skilled coach (i.e. process, disaster prep/response, facilitation) • Rural: Good idea because no resources • Urban: Good idea but already doing something 	<p>Group Two:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who: Insider vs. outsider debate • Who: Political agendas • Who pays? • Qualification?
<p>Group Three:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience and expertise • Someone to take responsibility • Motivating • Coach can intervene, be impartial • Ability to draw people into process (especially rural) 	<p>Group Three:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EM somewhat hesitant, some threat (responsibility, hypersensitivity) • Needs to be someone who knows community – concept of “co-coach” from EM (urban group) • CG more open to coaching than EM • Funds/costs of coach • Coach can’t do it all • Needs to be trusted (especially rural)

Additional comments presented by James Barnes (Louisiana) via email:

- The role of the Coach must be clearly defined, qualifications listed and authority (if any) clearly identified within the existing set of agencies that handle disasters.
- Whether the Coach is an insider or outsider DOES matter because this perception affects the initial trust between community and this individual. Trust can be earned over time as well, but the Coach must be someone who can bring together groups. Hence, trust is key.
- The structure of interaction between the Coach and the GIS mapping group or person must be clearly identified. Will the data be stored centrally by FEMA? Will FEMA centralize the development of the maps or allow local/state groups to do this? What type of training will Coaches obtain from FEMA to enable effective communication between communities and the development of GIS maps?
- Coaches should receive a minimum amount of GIS training so they can effectively communicate with the GIS mapping group. A basic vocabulary in GIS is needed.
- FEMA should consider providing Coaches with basic GIS training through Land Grant Universities because of access to ArcView software, on-line training modules and overall access to technical expertise.

SESSION FOUR: DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS TO FEMA AND CSREES

Group One: (Rachel's group)

- Go back to communities that participated in the project to report where the project is heading:
 - Next steps
 - Future funding opportunities (recommend a competitive grant process)
- Current SRDC process raises awareness of the needs of disadvantaged populations – expand to other areas
- Report to the state level Emergency Managers the results of this project
- Market the process and program
- Partner FEMA's Regional Catastrophic Preparedness centers with the RRDC's and EDEN
- Define the role and skill set (core competencies) of coaches
- Ramp up/ continue EPD process adoption; Provide funding through a competitive grants process to encourage community "buy-in" up front
- Invest in an outside evaluation of the original pilot sites from EPD – look at both readiness to respond as well as capacity building/leadership development
- Refine/develop training model and curriculum/resources: consider a train-the-trainer model
- Catalogue GIS resources; identify resource "hubs" that may be able to provide both GIS and coaching assistance (i.e. universities)
- Focus on the significant needs of rural areas that are already lacking resources
- Document impacts clearly to tell the story
- Consider low-tech methods of doing the mapping process (those not requiring GIS)

Group Two: (Molly's group)

- Pay for development of training course for EPD coaches
- Provide stipends for those that would take the training
- Provide community seed grants
- Resources to implement the plan
- Go back to communities to continue the dialogue – build capacity to continue on with pilot communities

Group Three: (Deborah's group)

- EPD process is valuable and should be pursued
- FEMA needs to project as a partner as opposed to the "final authority."
- FEMA needs to emphasize planning at all levels
- FEMA needs to communicate results from the project to state and local EMS to provide legitimacy and support
- Clearly define the role of the coach
- FEMA needs to address the skills, commitment, and competency of the Emergency Managers
- Funding for developing true curriculum for/from EPD
- Funding for demonstration projects in communities in this project.
- FEMA to work with philanthropies for funds for planning
- FEMA to do better vulnerability assessments (mapping)
- Formal and informal relationships with other organizations (ESFs especially)
- Address ways to involve locals, get buy-in

SESSION FIVE: EXAMINING EXTENSION'S ROLE

Extension:

- Has the knowledge and trust of the community
- Should become more actively involved in disaster management. What would it take?
 - Is it a priority for CES? In counties?
 - Administrative approval and support
 - Programmatic alignment (CD, ANR, FCS, 4H?)
- Can serve on Boards
- Can assist in response
- Can assist in education and information dissemination
- Promotes state and county level involvement
- Can network with EDEN
- Provides training/facilitation/coaching
- Provides technical assistance or access to (i.e. GIX, recovery)
- Builds capacity in communities
- Has diverse audiences
- Can provide links to networks and connections to stakeholders
- Is non-biased
- Can provide coordination
- Has the ability to help communities identify assets and improve decision-making
- Consider pursuing disaster issues as a national priority through the system (suggestion by Claude and Brian after the meeting)
- Additional thoughts sent by email from James Barnes – Louisiana:
 - Extension has an office in every parish/county. This allows agents to know the local population, assets in the community and what type of personalities exist that have to be managed by an incoming Coach
 - Extension is viewed as a credible organization with access to stakeholders in rural areas and technical expertise in GIS.
 - Extension is viewed as an unbiased, non-political organization that has a reputation of bringing groups together. We have a history of facilitating community change.
 - Extension can work with the Coaches to create the GIS community maps to enable better preparedness. (See LA's West Carroll Parish example)

Other Outlets:

- NACDEP
- JOE
- Emergency Management
- EDEN – (Smith-Lever)
- Summary “Voices of the People” report – create a similar report