FEMA Promising Practice: Establishing Disability Community Preparedness Through State and Local Efforts
Webinar March 10, 2016

Richmond, California CERT
People with Disabilities and Others with Access and Functional Needs Community Outreach Program

Presentation by Kathryn Gerk, CEM, Richmond, CA Fire OES
What we will cover today:

• Lessons Learned from past Disasters

• Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) Training with and for People with Disabilities and others with Access and Functional Needs (PWD AFN)
   Why and How

• Tips and Best Practices
   Local CERT PWD/E Outreach Packet
Lessons Learned from Hurricane Katrina

• 73% of deaths in New Orleans Hurricane Katrina
  ▪ Persons age 60+
  ▪ Comprised only 15 percent of population

AARP, We Can Do Better: Lessons Learned for Protecting Older Persons in Disasters, 2006
How we Started: - Didn’t Know what we didn’t know

- Secured **TOP LEVEL SUPPORT**
- Surveys to determine needs and challenges
  - Ask the tough questions – open dialogue
- Identified greatest concerns:
  - Security/Safety
  - Emergency Supplies, medications, etc.
  - Family/caregivers assistance and communications
  - Transportation
Realizations – Next Steps:

• Developed Action Items Matrix
  ❖ FEMA ADA Toolkit for Local Government
  ❖ Broken down in 8 categories
  ❖ Identified who, what, where, when and how
  ❖ Continuous improvement

• Developed collaborative Work Groups, agreements & continuous sharing
  ❖ Based on greatest concerns from survey
Looked at Plans and Training Gaps

• Issues/challenges identified in Surveys

• Resources
  ❖ Needed
  ❖ Available - collaborative efforts
    ▪ (DME providers agreements, etc.)

• Need to improve overall resilience for ALL community
Where we wanted to go – FULLY INCLUSIVE

Plans and Training:

• Emergency Operations Plans & Training
  - First Responder Training
  - Shelter Operations Plans & training
  - Transportation & Evacuation
  - Shelter-In-Place

• CERT Teams Training
  - CERT Neighborhood Team Community Outreach Efforts
WHY CERT WORKED WELL

• CERT Goal: “To Do the Most Good for the most number of People”

WHY?

• Foster Collaboration WITH AND FOR PWD AFN & CERT Teams IN THEIR neighborhood

• CERT’s are in a unique position to increase resilience at the neighborhood level
Started with Basic ADA Issues

• Always treat everyone with respect

• PWD and others with AFN = over 30% population and growing

• Include in ALL planning
  ▪ “Nothing about us without us”
Basic ADA Issues and CERT Training

• Be Prepared - If you are not sure – ASK

• SAFETY FIRST
  ▪ Accessibility
  ▪ Mobility issues
  ▪ Lighting
  ▪ Audio
EVERYONE Needs to be Involved

• CERT Teams are in a unique position to help individuals prepare

• Planning *before* an emergency can save lives, reduce illness and injury

• Doing something *NOW* is better than hoping for assistance after emergency
CERT Training to Empower Everyone

• Think ahead…develop an emergency plan
  ▪ Communication during emergency

• Make an emergency kit
  ▪ Does not need to be complicated or expensive

• Stay informed
  ▪ Local emergency plans and services

• Get involved
  ▪ Join CERT Team
What roles do PWD AFN fulfill in CERT Teams?

• Incident Commander
• Team Leader
• Documentation
• Communications
• Logistics
• Safety Officer
• And more . . . .
CERT Buddy System at its Best!

- Neighborhood CERT Teams working together
  - Team effort – role for everyone
    - training and planning
    - Increases preparedness for all
  - Empowering everyone
- Speeds up recovery efforts
• Create an emergency support network

• Work with providers and social support networks to develop contingency plans for an emergency
  ▪ Complete Vial of Life
  ▪ Carry a medications list in your wallet
  ▪ Develop a transportation plan
CERT PWD AFN for all CERT Team Members

- Personal Preparedness
  - Make a kit, stay informed, get involved
- Share emergency plans
- Communication
- Transportation
Developed by Contra Costa County CERT PWD AFN collaboration with:

- County Health Services
- County Animal Services
- American Medical Response
  - Grant from UASI
  - English & Spanish
CERT Neighborhood Outreach Packets

• Community guide, resources, Vial of Life, Window signs & clings

• Download at: http://ca-richmond2.civicplus.com/206/Office-of-Emergency-Services
We are ALL in this together

- Right thing to do
- Right time
- Right reason –
  - For the Good of the whole community
MUST HAVE TOP LEVEL SUPPORT

• Continue to outreach and question

• Continue to collaborate

• Continue to do the right thing for ALL
Finally

Working together increases everyone's chances for survival

Questions?

Thank You – AND a BIG Thanks to Contra Costa County CERT Committee!

Kathryn Gerk, CEM

Kathy_gerk@ci.richmond.ca.us