**Building a Safer, more Resilient Dallas: Whole-Community Preparedness Program**

Problem assessment, the challenge or need that prompted the local government to develop the Program:

Economic inequality. Poor health infrastructure. Drastic, ever-changing weather patterns. Susceptibility to terrorist attack. While Dallas maintains itself as a vibrant, urban center for the North Central Texas region, with a population of over 1.2 M and growing, it faces these and other obstacles to sustaining a thriving, resilient community. It is for this reason that in late 2015, the City’s Office of Emergency Management (OEM) took time to critically evaluate its impact on making Dallas a safer, more prepared community. From this, a roadmap was developed to engage in several activities to formulate a multi-faceted Whole-Community Preparedness Program. The OEM devoted itself to several activities which had a targeted approach in engaging those who live, work, and play in the City of Dallas. Additionally, as the City has taken a strong stance on seeking to break the endemic cycle of poverty, special significance was directed at those who may be most susceptible in times of crisis with engagement that often targeted communities with lower income and/or English as a second language.

Program Implementation and Costs

*External Focus: Equipping our Community*

The OEM hit the ground running beginning with a targeted engagement of its “Build a Kit, Make a Plan, and Know your Neighbors” campaign which was designed to specifically address needs and hazards that prominently affected members of the community. To accomplish this in a highly interactive and engaging manner, staff developed a 90-minute instructor led training to guide participants in accomplishing these critical elements of emergency preparedness. Attendees received a guidebook to accompany the training that contained several activities to help in identifying items for an emergency supply kit, development of a family emergency plan, and the beginning of a neighborhood emergency plan. This was rolled out to internal City staff, community groups and business organizations. For those unable to attend in person training, original videos, guides, infographics, and flyers were produced in English and Spanish and made readily accessible via the department’s webpage and other social media outlets.

In addition, understanding the critical role that our Private sector community plays in the economic recovery post a disaster event, the second phase to this Program was engagement through a Public-Private Partnership Symposium. Held in March of 2016, this half-day training introduced business and community leaders to the OEM as well a variety of public safety partners. Topics involved what to do in an active shooter situation, how to plan evacuations in the downtown area, emergency messaging, and risk assessments. Attendees left with the knowledge and resources to better prepare their organizations for the unthinkable, to reduce loss of life and property, and to make recovery faster and more efficient for the City.

These activities culminated in an Emergency Preparedness Extravaganza. Held in September 2016 to coincide with National Preparedness Month, this fair featured food, fun and demonstrations, designed to build awareness of what local community members should do in the event of a variety of emergency situations. Partnering agencies set up booths and showcased response vehicles to educate attendees on the resources available to provide disaster relief. However, this fair was not just about the “fun “as staff sought to ensure focus was directed towards a segment of the community that traditionally is underserved and had missed opportunities to receive education on preparedness. Strategically, the venue location was chosen in the western area of Dallas which boasts a predominantly large Spanish speaking community.

*Internal Focus: Safeguarding our Staff*

A City’s safety and resiliency is only as good as the strength of its employee base. Therefore, the final phase of the Program took more of an internal focus and sought to better safeguard employees for the City of Dallas. With an unfortunate uptick in instances of active shooter occurrences, the OEM signed on to the nationally recognized “Stop the Bleed” campaign. This emphasizes that no matter how rapid emergency services can arrive on-scene, those first present will often respond and provide life-saving care if equipped with the right resources. Because of this, OEM procured specialized trauma medical kits containing supplies to apply hemorrhage control to an injured person. Equipping several City facilities, employees were then trained on when and how to properly use these kits.

|  |
| --- |
| **Program Costs** |
| **Build a Kit, Make a Plan, and Know your Neighbors Campaign**- Addition of FTE committed to expansion of Whole Community Preparedness Program- Education materials and supplies- Marketing and advertising  |  $ 62,500.00  |
| **Public-Private Partner Symposium and Emergency Preparedness Extravaganza** - Venue - Logistics/ supplies- Public education materials- First aid kits |  $ 15,000.00  |
| **Trauma Medical Kits** - The OEM procured over 45 of these trauma kits in 2016 |  $ 38,185.44  |
| Total: | $ 115,685.44 \* |
| ***\*Above mentioned activities were all funded by Department of Homeland Security grants, Target Community grants and generous sponsorships of partner agencies with no realized costs to the City of Dallas.*** |

Tangible results or measurable outcomes of the Program:

Implementation of these activities yielded several favorable results (2016 calendar year):

* More than 6500 residents, students and business attended an in-person training or presentations.
* The OEM’s Community Emergency Response Team grew by an additional 400 members.
* Over 250 attendees, with more than 100 businesses represented, at the first annual Public-Private Symposium.
* The Preparedness Fair Extravaganza had over 25 participating agencies and an estimated 500 community members that attended.

With this number of newly educated community members, the calculation of time and money savings are almost immeasurable. Though, a safe assumption could be a reduction of recovery costs in the millions post an emergency or disaster event impacting the City of Dallas.

Lessons learned about the planning, implementation and analysis of the Program from my perspective would be as follows

In final analysis, the OEM strongly feels that an organization must actively seek opportunities to be in the community and carry out the message of preparedness in a way that connects to the diverse populations representing the City of Dallas. Future initiatives will look to continue to build partnerships with community leaders, to expand the reach of the program, training of additional instructors to offer the amount of trainings equal to the demand we are seeing for the Program, and continued expansion of the number of languages our programs are offered in. Simply put, Whole-Community Preparedness starts and ends with our involvement and responsiveness directly with the Community.

How the Program raises awareness of the contributions of Local Government Managers

The City of Dallas and the Office of Emergency Management are committed to reducing the impacts of disasters to build a safer, more prepared community and thus was the push in creation of a more robust Whole Community Preparedness Program. Through open engagement, building and enhancing partnerships, communicating with trust, and increasing equity of service, the OEM sought to aide in improving the quality of life and livability of all community members. Arguably, this is a priority for any local government manager and why these efforts highlight those contributions.