Berkeley CERT
Getting Ready Together

Disaster Preparedness
and Network Building
Community Workshop

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The 2014 Berkeley CERT Citywide Exercise Planning Team

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And to all participating individuals, neighborhood groups, businesses and community organizations.
Executive Summary
This after action report is intended to assist the City of Berkeley’s Office of Emergency Services and the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program by identifying strengths, identifying potential areas for further improvement, and by recommending follow-up actions learned from the 2013 Berkeley CERT Getting Ready Together workshop.

The 2013 Berkeley CERT Getting Ready Together community workshop was held at South Berkeley Senior Center on October 15, 2013. Objectives of the exercise focused on forming community networks and sharing successful organizational, individual and group strategies and practices. The workshop was scheduled from 630pm to 830pm. Over 90 community members participated.

The event activities were designed to engage community members in discussing successful and effective practices they have personally employed in their organization, neighborhood group or in their homes. The event agenda brought participants together to share their geographic location during registration. Attendees then gathered at tables designated by their locations in the 7 local fire districts to participate in a facilitated discuss best practices and successful strategies led by a CERT volunteer. An overall group discussion followed where ideas were shared throughout the room. Finally, participants were given an opportunity to provide input into future events, most specifically a planned disaster preparedness fair in the coming spring.
Strengths

Key strengths identified included:

- Community participation was represented from all seven fire districts.
- Community members representing a broad range of stakeholders including neighborhood groups, local businesses, schools, faith based organizations, non-profits serving vulnerable and underserved populations, and individuals attended.
- The workshop was sponsored by the Fire Department but was largely developed and delivered by community volunteers, including 15 volunteers who provided hospitality, staffed all logistics, and conducted program facilitation for the two hour event.

Areas for Improvement

Recommendations for improvement included:

- Despite the significant turnout, many community stakeholders could be engaged in disaster preparedness at an increased level.
- Increased number of events and ways for community members to participate in their own preparedness should be offered.
Narrative

The City of Berkeley’s Community Emergency Response Team aims to provide education in disaster preparedness and training in basic emergency skills. By preparing neighborhoods and community groups with basic emergency skills we can lessen the effect of a disaster and help sustain ourselves until assistance can arrive.

The Getting Ready Together community workshop focused on bringing community members together to strengthen local networks and to share successful practices within community groups and organizations around disaster preparedness.

Workshop Objectives

1. Share effective practices for disaster preparedness within our community.
2. Meet neighbors and organizations in your local fire district.

Building Networks

Meeting and getting to know your neighbors has long been a recognized component of community preparedness and resiliency. Getting Ready Together sought to support the building of community networks around the topic of disaster preparedness by allowing participants to self identify their geographic location within the community. The workshop registration process prompted participants to pin their location on a map. During the group level discussion activity, participants were seated with those in their local fire district which helped them to make connections and identify goals and success stories with those who they are most likely to support both in the course of dealing with daily emergencies as well as disaster situations.

Each participant pinned their location on the event map.
Sharing Success

Organizing our community for disaster preparedness presents us with many challenges. From the details of resource identification and hazard and vulnerability analysis to naturally competing priorities and the challenge of engaging all segments of our community, individuals, neighborhood groups, businesses, and all organizations share many of the same questions about how to best approach the issues.

Getting Ready Together fostered the sharing of effective practices and successful activities conducted in our community. Collectively, our community knows best both what our risks are and how we can support each other in addressing these risks. When asked “Who in this room thinks that they, personally, - in a disaster or emergency situation- believe they have a resource, know a skill, or could otherwise contribute to support their neighbors?”, virtually the entire audience self identified as community responders in this context. In the same way, the workshop participants supported each other’s efforts in preparedness by sharing their success stories and effective practices, whether as a business, a school, a neighborhood group leader, a faith based organizational leader, or as an individual.
Overview

Activity Name
Getting Ready Together

Duration
2 hours

Exercise Dates
October 15, 2013

Sponsoring Agencies
Berkeley Fire Department
Berkeley Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

Number of Participants
Players 75
Volunteers 15
City of Berkeley Staff 1

Focus
Preparedness

Type of Exercise
Workshop

Evaluation
Event evaluation was conducted for players through participant feedback forms. Participants identified strengths, areas for improvement and potential improvement actions.

Planning team members conducted a debriefing meeting on October 21 as self-evaluation and to prepare for next steps.
Workshop Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event or Activity Description, Notes, Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/15</td>
<td>1830 hrs</td>
<td>Workshop Start – Registration and Networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/15</td>
<td>1845 hrs</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/15</td>
<td>1900hrs</td>
<td>Activity 1 – Best Practices and Success Stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/15</td>
<td>2000hrs</td>
<td>Activity 2- Input into Future Community-wide Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/15</td>
<td>2030hrs</td>
<td>Workshop End</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demonstrated Strengths and Improvement Plan

The 2013 Berkeley CERT Getting Ready Together objectives were to promote information sharing and building of community networks for disaster preparedness in Berkeley. Below are key strengths demonstrated in the delivery of the workshop:

- Geographic distribution of community participation filled each fire district. See Appendix A for a breakdown of participation.
- Community members representing a broad range of stakeholders including neighborhood groups, local businesses, schools, faith based organizations, non-profits serving vulnerable and underserved populations, and individuals attended. In addition to neighborhood group leaders working to increase safety and readiness with their neighbors, some notable local organizations represented included Easy Does It, L’école Bilingual, Fast Response, Liberty Hill Baptist Church, and Center for Early Intervention to Deafness.
- This event was an example of a community supporting its own emergency readiness needs. Volunteers of the CERT program designed, developed and delivered the workshop with support from Berkeley Fire Department. In addition to the 15 volunteers who staffed the 2 hour workshop through all logistics as well as program delivery, many volunteer hours were spent leading up to the event in designing an interactive and supportive program.

Areas of improvement identified include the following:

- Despite the significant turnout, many community stakeholders could be engaged in disaster preparedness at an increased level. Although outreach for the event was purposefully limited as a test of the format, the most successful outreach to community stakeholders not previously represented in city disaster preparedness programs came through direct contact from volunteers via telephone and in person. The diversity of risks, needs, cultures, languages, and structures in our community requires that our outreach efforts be developed and expanded to be flexible diverse approaches.
- More events and ways for community members to participate in their own preparedness should be conducted. Getting Ready Together was conceived as the first
of a three part delivery of citywide emergency readiness engagement opportunities. The CERT Citywide Exercise Planning Team has calendared two additional citywide events in 2014. In addition to the now annual citywide emergency exercise to be held in the fall, a preparedness fair held in the spring will support goals and objectives for the fall exercise. The team is motivated to continue to increase opportunities for community engagement in disaster readiness in multi-faceted approaches that will support the diverse needs of our community.

Conclusion
Taking the evening to build community networks and to share ideas and practical approaches to our own challenges did not solve all of our community’s disaster resiliency challenges. However, clear results that support our readiness goals were observed including: a school in west Berkeley connecting with a nearby non-profit to now share efforts for emergency readiness; a business in downtown Berkeley connected with City departments to further discuss how it can support response efforts post disaster; awareness of the diversity of cultures, challenges, and needs in our community were raised even for those who designed and delivered the workshop; a previously unengaged neighborhood member committed to becoming a neighborhood leader for preparedness. Most apparently, 2013 Berkeley CERT Getting Ready Together workshop demonstrated the ability of community members to contribute to their own emergency readiness.
Appendix A
Exercise Statistics Summary

Participation

90 Community Members representing neighborhood groups, schools, local business, non-profit agencies, city government, faith-based organization and individuals.

Logistics

One Fire Department staff, one senior center staff and 15 volunteers provided event logistics including venue setup and cleanup, participant registration, refreshments, tabletop facilitation, and overall program management.

Fire Districts

Distribution of number of participants across fire districts follows:

- Fire District 1: 13
- Fire District 2: 7
- Fire District 3: 12
- Fire District 4: 14
- Fire District 5: 17
- Fire District 6: 5
- Fire District 7: 7