

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

VOLUNTEERS & VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS

Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

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The Aware & Prepare Initiative continued development of an active VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters) organization made up of non-governmental agencies in partnership with local government to improve coordination and capabilities in disaster preparedness and response, as well as a planned and coordinated system for integrating volunteers and DSWs (Disaster Service Workers) during all phases of emergencies and disasters.

CHALLENGE

Volunteers & voluntary organizations

Santa Barbara County has twice the number of nonprofits per capita compared to the average for California, second only to Marin County. 82% of these 2,000 organizations have budgets of less than \$1 million, which results in limited staffing to achieve their mission. Although it is well known that this region is vulnerable to a variety of hazards, non-profit organizations often do not have the capacity to prioritize emergency readiness. With 25% of not-for-profit and private businesses unable re-open after a disaster, not fully understanding their roles and responsibilities can adversely affect their engagement in preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

The established mechanism for engaging non-profit organizations in emergency management is the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD). There was some effort to establish a VOAD in Santa Barbara County during the early '90s as part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) now defunct Project Impact, but the volunteer-led and volunteer-driven organization succumbed to leadership turnover and other competing priorities.



APPROACH

Bringing Structure and Streamlined Communication

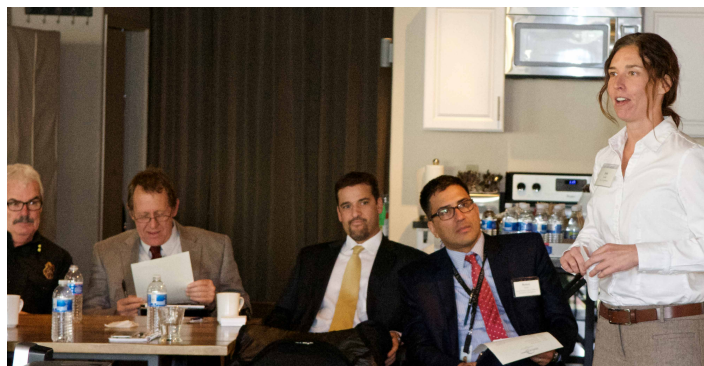
In 2007, an Initial Needs Assessment conducted by James Lee Witt Associates highlighted the lack of coordination and communication between government agencies and non-profit organizations as a gap that needed to be addressed. As a result, the Aware & Prepare Initiative provided significant funding support to re-invigorate the Santa Barbara County Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (SBC VOAD) through the Santa Barbara County Chapter of the American Red Cross. Funding supported the hiring of a full-time coordinator to provide structure for membership recruitment and retention as well as strategic collaboration with government agencies, and to streamline identification and deployment of resources.



ADAPTATION

The Usual Challenge of Success: Scaling up

After several years of initial investment in capacity-building, the leadership of SBC VOAD began to prioritize long-term sustainability. This required implementing measures such as charging a small fee for membership, reducing overhead costs, and transitioning responsibilities from a full-time coordinator to a ten-member Executive Committee. The fiscal agent of SBC VOAD also transitioned from the Santa Barbara County Chapter of the American Red Cross to the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County.





\$205,000
INVESTED

38
NON-PROFIT & FAITH-BASED PARTNERS

10
MEMBER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

IMPACT

The Community has Rolled up its Sleeves

Over 5,800 residents have received CERT training in Santa Barbara County (over 1% of the population). In 2012, the county began teaching CERT in Spanish and trained over 300 monolingual Spanish speakers. In the same year, the County CERT Committee received the California Governor's Volunteering & Service Award for Service Group of the Year. In 2014, Santa Barbara County conducted the first Spanish CERT Train-the-Trainer program in the nation and certified 38 Spanish instructors.

Listos has trained over 588 monolingual Spanish speakers in Santa Barbara County. This includes the certification of Promotoras de Salud to teach Listos in their own communities. Listos Train-the-Trainer programs exist in Santa Maria, Santa Barbara, and Carpinteria. In early 2014, the Listos program was also piloted in the Bay Area, Los Angeles, and San Diego.

CONTINUITY

Training the Trainer and Building Teams

Both the CERT and Listos programs are built on models that certify trainers to continue teaching the course as needed. The Santa Barbara County CERT Committee continues to provide training and support for both on-going and new programs. In 2014, the Santa Barbara County CERT Leadership Academy was launched to provide advanced training to CERTs while also identifying local CERTs who are interested in helping take the program to the next level by creating a more team-based program model.

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FOUNDATION

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