

AWARE PREPARE 2011 EVALUATION: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive summary of the 2011 summative
evaluation of the Aware & Prepare Initiative.

2011

The Orfalea Fund's Aware & Prepare Initiative Program Evaluation Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to summarize outcomes from the Aware & Prepare Initiative Program Evaluation Report regarding the value of philanthropic investment in strengthening emergency and disaster readiness within the Santa Barbara County Operational Area.



The purpose of this document is to provide a condensed summary of the comprehensive Aware & Prepare Initiative Program Evaluation Report. There is important background information as well as data collection and analysis that are not included in this Executive Summary so that it can remain brief and concise. The longer, more detailed report is available upon request. Please contact Barbara Andersen by email at Barbara@orfalea.org or by phone at (805) 565 – 7550 ext. 112.

Executive Summary

Aware & Prepare: A Community Partnership to Strengthen Emergency & Disaster Readiness was established in January 2008 as an Orfalea Fund Initiative in partnership with the Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management (OEM), Witt Group Holdings, LLC (Witt Associates), and local foundations. The mission is to create a community partnership to enhance capabilities to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters within the Santa Barbara County Operational Area. Although the mission has remained the same, the Aware & Prepare Initiative has evolved to be a unique and dynamic public-private partnership that prioritizes collaborative strategic planning and decision-making.

The inception of the Aware & Prepare Initiative was instigated as a result of the catastrophic impact of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on the southeastern region of the United States in 2005. After witnessing the devastation of communities that were insufficiently prepared to respond and recover from a catastrophic disaster, the Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury began an investigation to determine the capabilities of local government to respond to a disaster of a similar magnitude such as an earthquake. As a result of this investigation, it was determined that Santa Barbara County was ill-equipped to respond to a large-scale emergency or catastrophic disaster in several key planning areas including emergency public information, the emergency operations center, emergency medical care, and emergency sheltering.¹

The Orfalea Fund subsequently convened a panel of key stakeholders from both government agencies and non-profit organizations to discuss their needs in being able to sufficiently respond to and recover from emergencies and disasters within the Santa Barbara County Operational Area. Because the needs ranged from equipment and supplies to public education materials and resources, the Orfalea Fund retained Witt Associates to assess emergency preparedness, response and recovery capabilities at the county level. This *Initial Needs Assessment* determined seven priority theme areas for improvement including: (1) Public Education & Awareness; (2) Coordination and Communication; (3) Preparedness: Planning, Training and Exercises; (4) Emergency Public Information; (5) Resources and Personnel; (6) Authority and Management; and (7) Volunteers and Voluntary Organizations.² These priority themes also created the granting structure in which funding requests were received, vetted and rejected or approved by the Orfalea Fund, on behalf of the collaborative of local foundations, in coordination with the Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management.

¹ Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury, "Disaster Preparedness: Are We Really Ready?" May 15, 2006. Available at: <http://www.sbcgj.org/2006/>.

² Please note that the title of the seventh priority theme has been revised since the Initial Needs Assessment conducted in 2007 based on feedback from the Emergency Coordinators Committee. The original theme was titled "Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster."

Evaluation Approach

The purpose of the Aware & Prepare Initiative program evaluation is to determine the effectiveness of philanthropic investment in emergency and disaster readiness within the Santa Barbara County Operational Area.³ Funding was primarily targeted to address gaps in capabilities as it related to non-profit and government sector resiliency as well as organizational capacity-building. However, our major priority as a result of the *Initial Needs Assessment* was to instigate and support cross-sector collaboration to strengthen community public education and awareness, as this was identified by key stakeholders as the most significant gap in emergency readiness throughout the Operational Area.

The approach to the program evaluation was guided by the Orfalea Fund Board of Directors. There was a determination at its onset that we would conduct as much of the data collection and analysis as possible internally with our partners, rather than seeking a third-party to facilitate this process. The Orfalea Foundations and Witt Associates understands that this creates an inherent level of bias in the outcomes, but the partners were very pleased at the level of open and honest feedback that was received during the one-on-one interview process as well as the modest perspective of Witt Associates in identifying lessons learned and best practices in the development and implementation of an initiative that the firm was retained to manage for three years.

Data Collection and Analysis

The Aware & Prepare Initiative conducted an annual survey of stakeholders in both 2009 and 2010 and those questions have ranged from identifying projects that have had the most impact to assessing the extent to which the initiative addressed the seven priority theme areas. The data from those surveys was utilized to refine strategy and gauge on-going impact of philanthropic investment in emergency preparedness that was shared in annual reporting to the Orfalea Fund Board of Directors and the Aware & Prepare Initiative partners. For this program evaluation, that data was aggregated and additional qualitative and quantitative data was collected for analysis.

One-on-one interviews, approximately one hour in length, were conducted with key stakeholders and guided by open-ended, non-leading questions. To maintain the integrity of the data collection from the *Initial Needs Assessment* to the *Aware & Prepare Initiative Program Evaluation*, the team of consultants from Witt Associates that conducted the interviews for the assessment in 2007 returned to conduct the interviews for the program evaluation. As a result, their own personal observations were incredibly valuable as they were also witnessing first-hand the evolution of the initiative over a four-year period, having been relatively removed from its day-to-day activities during that time. The team also distributed an electronic survey asking yes-or-no questions to provide a level of clarity

³ The Santa Barbara County Operational Area is a term that is meant to encompass all government subsidiaries within the geographic boundaries of Santa Barbara County including special districts and unincorporated areas.

and further context to the open-ended questions.⁴ The subsequent analysis of the data was organized and prioritized, with the approval of the Orfalea Fund Board of Directors, into five different components including level of capability, the public-private partnership, value of investment, grantmaking procedures and processes, and program structure.

Level of Capability

The *Initial Needs Assessment* conducted in 2007 identified gaps that existed in emergency management capabilities within the Santa Barbara County Operational Area. These gaps were categorized by seven priority themes and addressed through strategic planning and investment of time, funding and other resources. In regards to data analysis, the most significant question is whether or not the level of emergency management capabilities changed over the course of the Aware & Prepare Initiative in each of the priority theme areas.

Public Education and Awareness

The objective of this priority theme area was to develop strategies and enhance capabilities to help the general public become better prepared for a disaster, including programs that specifically target vulnerable populations (including those with functional access needs, the elderly, and non-English speaking populations) and address all-hazards emergencies. The main focus within this priority theme was to build an Operational Area-wide public education and awareness campaign with consistent and coordinated messaging. Due to the organizational changes being undertaken by the Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Services (OES) in 2007 along with the disconnect between OES and the jurisdictions under previous leadership, the Aware & Prepare Initiative decided to take a different approach. Instead, support was directed to jurisdictional efforts to strengthen individual and family preparedness in an attempt to develop and “pilot” innovative approaches to public education to determine what messages and tools had the most impact in engaging residents to be more proactive. Jurisdictional campaigns include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **City of Carpinteria, ‘Don’t Panic! Prepare!’ Public Education and Awareness Campaign.** The City of Carpinteria utilized an existing preparedness guide developed by Topanga Canyon that they revised and adapted to address their specific community needs. This guide, developed by a committee of community leaders and engaged citizens, is written in both English and Spanish and is being distributed to participants of neighborhood trainings and community disaster education (CDE) workshops along with basic disaster kits.
- **City of Goleta, Prepare Now/Goleta Preparese Hoy!** Goleta Prepare Now is aimed at increasing the level of overall awareness and emergency preparedness in the City of Goleta and the Goleta Valley at large. This is being accomplished through

⁴ The response rate on the survey was 50% equating to a total of 27 respondents. The one-on-one interviews included a total of 28 participants.

four program components: (1) increase readiness and promote emergency preparedness via public information workshops, special events, meetings, and media campaigns; (2) provide emergency supply kits to “vulnerable populations” in the Goleta Valley; (3) train volunteers in neighborhood emergency preparedness and response; and (4) celebrate September as Emergency Preparedness Month with public outreach and community displays at key locations. The purpose of this program is to encourage personal readiness for future disasters, which includes having an emergency kit, making a plan, and having the tools and informational resources at hand before an emergency occurs.

- **City of Santa Maria, Ready Santa Maria and North County Collaborative Emergency Preparedness Program.** This program is aimed at improving emergency coordination and communication among Santa Maria, Guadalupe and Allan Hancock College, and between the cities and volunteer groups and the Santa Barbara County Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), local media, and emergency related organizations; and improving methods for providing emergency public information to diverse populations in northern Santa Barbara County.
- **City of Solvang/City of Buellton, Community Emergency Preparedness Program.** The primary goal of the Santa Ynez Valley Preparedness Program is to build the community capacity needed in the Solvang, Buellton, and Santa Ynez Valley areas to enhance the public’s readiness to respond to any and all emergency situations. The Program Coordinator is working in collaboration with a variety of local government offices and agencies, school districts, businesses and organizations to educate the public about the importance of disaster preparedness with specific emphasis on Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training.

The Aware & Prepare Initiative also “piloted” and launched *Listos*, an emergency preparedness public education and awareness program that specifically targets Spanish-speaking populations within the Santa Barbara County Operational Area.



Listos uses a grass-root, flexible approach to obtaining entry into both formal and informal trusted networks, becoming part of that network and delivering information through an established trust. *Listos* participants are provided with basic tools to increase the resilience of not only themselves and their families, but also their neighbors and peers and extended community.

Coordination and Communication

The objective of this priority theme area was to develop strategies and capabilities to develop strong relationships within the community, and specifically between the local government and non-governmental and non-for-profit organizations. The primary role of the Aware & Prepare Initiative within this priority theme was to be a convener and facilitator between and among government and non-profit organizations. This included the support of re-building and sustaining the Emergency Coordinators Committee (ECC) and the Santa Barbara County Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), as well as the hosting of several roundtable discussions in an effort to address existing gaps in emergency

preparedness throughout the Santa Barbara County Operational Area in a multi-sector collaborative manner. Topics included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Functional Access Needs, People with Disabilities and Elderly in Times of Disaster;
- Non-English Speaking Populations in Times of Disaster; and
- Institutions of Higher Education and Disaster Readiness.

In the survey conducted as part of the Aware & Prepare Program Evaluation, of the eighty-eight percent (88%) of stakeholders that participated in a roundtable discussion in 2010, one hundred percent (100%) state that they are still involved with and/or meeting on the same issues today. In each annual survey, increased levels of coordination and communication seemed to resonate among some stakeholders with one survey participant claiming “joint meetings have revealed how all agencies work together, share valuable information and are ready to help and share their knowledge.” Communication through information sharing was mentioned many times as having been improved when one survey participant plainly stated, “We could not have disseminated our message to the community without the assistance of Aware & Prepare.” Enhancing communication between the sectors and stakeholders has invariably heightened awareness. One stakeholder mentioned it was beneficial knowing that “other groups had similar goals” which allowed them to share strategic models. This also highlighted the intention of mitigating duplicated efforts. The feedback also showed that Aware & Prepare spurred new ideas. New ideas were apparent in responses on the “old ways” of conducting emergency response and preparedness evolving into a new paradigm that welcomed new approaches. One detailed comment read, “It became apparent that ‘but we always have done it this way’ conversation was beginning to be replaced with ‘let’s explore a new approach’ and there was less resistance to trying something new, building new relationships and demonstrating more courage and less authority.” Despite a few cases where stakeholders felt they were not effectively heard, the feedback provides clear indications that meetings were beneficial to most of the attendees.

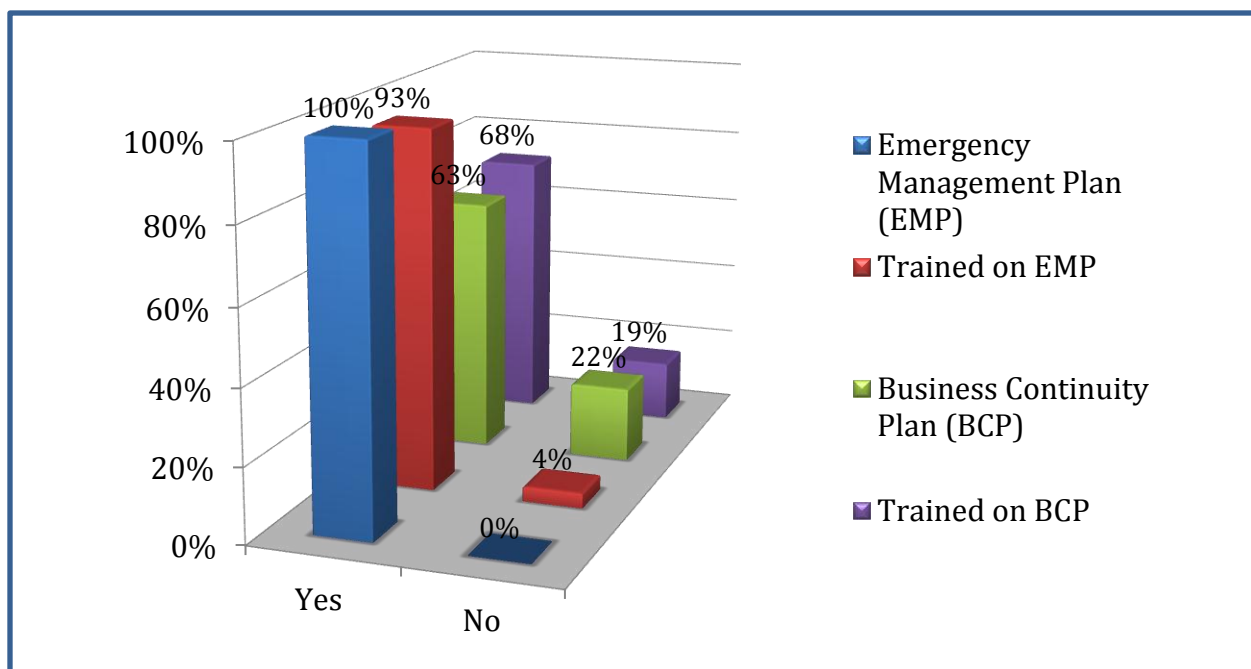
Preparedness: Planning, Training and Exercises

The objective of this priority theme area was to develop an active and inclusive planning process as well as training and exercise program in the community, including quality control, continuous improvement, and feedback mechanisms. The Aware & Prepare Initiative specifically targeted support and investment to key non-profit organizations that have a role in response and recovery within the Santa Barbara County Operational Area as well as jurisdictions that admittedly had plans that were out-dated or not as integrated and comprehensive as other partners. For instance, the City of Santa Maria is facilitating a collaborative planning process with jurisdictions in northern Santa Barbara County, including the City of Guadalupe and Allan Hancock College, to ensure that plans are integrated and that expectations are clear in how these entities will be supporting each other when an emergency or disaster impacts the entire region.

Over the past three years, several non-profit organizations that have a role in responding to and recovering from emergencies and disasters in Santa Barbara County have undertaken a

comprehensive and sustained effort to enhance their emergency preparedness and planning programs. These organizations include Direct Relief International (DRI), Foodbank of Santa Barbara County, Santa Barbara Neighborhood Clinics (SBNC), Unity Shoppe, Inc., and Community Health Centers of the Central Coast. With the completion of the Back-Up Generator and Refrigeration Project, DRI is now able to function in the event of a local power failure and has the capability to store and ship cold-chain medications and vaccines, thus expanding its ability to meet the needs of its partners and the patients they serve. The Unity Shoppe, SBNC, and the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County have completed Emergency Operations Plans (EOP) that will allow them to continue to provide critical services to the community during an emergency or disaster, and have, or will be, installing emergency back-up electrical power at designated facilities.

Figure 1.1 Survey Respondents on Emergency and Business Continuity Planning and Training



Emergency Public Information

The objective of this priority theme area was to develop strategies and capabilities (including information technology and equipment) to warn the public of an impending disaster and to provide emergency instructions on suggested actions. The Aware & Prepare Initiative supported several programs and projects that targeted this priority theme area including the **Radio Ready** program, a partnership between the Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management and California Concern. **Radio Ready** included the purchase and installation of satellite technology for the Operational Area Emergency Operations Center and OEM Duty Officer mobile communications vehicle, as well as four designated radio stations throughout the county that have back-up generator power. This



will allow OEM to communicate emergency information to the public even when all utilities are out. There is also an on-going public education and awareness campaign to encourage residents to purchase hand-cranked radios as well as the distribution of radios to designated low-income populations.

The Aware & Prepare Initiative also supported the increase in capacity of the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department **Reverse 9-1-1 Program**. The expansion included the replacement of the old server and the addition of a more robust server that doubled the calling capacity and added other valuable features such as redundancy, speed of deliverability, and room for future capacity growth. The Sheriff's Department has also added a new "self-registration protocol" that enables residents to register on-line and identify how they would like to be notified including Short Message Service (SMS) texting, email, cell phone, and/or landline. The system is then able to show the resident a map indicating the location in which the number is geographically registered.

In addition, the Aware & Prepare Initiative, along with the Homeland Security Grant Program and departmental funding, supported the Santa Barbara County Fire Department in their Fire Command and Control System project. This project involved the purchase and installation of repeater radios on at least seven mountain-top communications sites located throughout the county. Voice radio repeaters with simulcast capability are required for use as command channels to effectively communicate over large geographic areas and to the Public Safety Dispatch Center in Santa Barbara during large-scale emergencies. This project facilitated the orderly transition to a completely narrowband radio system as mandated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The improved radio system allows an interoperable command channel to be dedicated for inter-agency incidents and provides the opportunity to assign a dedicated command channel at large-scale, long-term incidents.

Resources and Personnel

The objective of this priority theme area was to develop strategies and capabilities to develop caches of disaster supplies, lists of capabilities and skills of organizations and responders, as well as knowing who has what and the capability to move resources (people and supplies) to where they are needed. The Aware & Prepare Initiative focused on targeted support that would assist in long-term and sustained capacity-building. The acquisition of resources and personnel was not the top priority, but it was justifiable in circumstances that required an initial investment of time and energy for the implementation and enhancement of a project or program. For instance, the acquisition of contract personnel was critical to the implementation of programs in the City of Goleta, Santa Ynez Valley, and City of Santa Maria. It was also important in the enhancement of key programs such as the Santa Barbara County Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster as well as the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) program. The purpose behind these designated coordinators was to build the programs so that they could be easily maintained over time.

Unfortunately, with the economic downturn and the elimination of key personnel along with the growing scarcity of resources, the sustainability of these programs without a designated contractor is in question. The Aware & Prepare Initiative has been working

with these individuals to develop sustainability plans, and will continue to address concerns as they emerge. There has also been a level of dependency that has evolved for this contractor support over the past three years, and the decreasing of time and effort committed to these on-going programs will require a transition similar to the one undertaken by the Aware & Prepare Initiative and its transition of management from Witt Associates to the Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management. During the one-on-one interviews, stakeholders expressed concern about these transitions and the lack of clarity in the changes that will occur as a result. Both the Orfalea Foundations and OEM are taking every opportunity to clarify expectations, and will continue to be open about the challenges.

Authority and Management

The objective of this priority theme area was to enhance facilities (including the Emergency Operations Center) and capabilities for community leadership to provide command, control and coordination of disaster response activities. Since its inception, the Aware & Prepare Initiative has advocated for a new Operational Area Emergency Operations Center, having identified the inadequacy of the facility as a significant gap in capabilities in the *Initial Needs Assessment* in 2007. With multiple recommendations by the Santa Barbara Civil Grand Jury dating back to 1996, and a tremendous financial contribution from the collaborative of funders supporting Aware & Prepare, the new multi-million dollar, 11,000 square foot EOC was approved by the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors in January 2010. The Santa Barbara County EOC is located off Lower Cathedral Oaks Road in the County Complex and is expected to officially open in September 2011. The new EOC was a tremendous accomplishment for the Aware & Prepare Initiative and its public-private partnership. This facility will host trainings, meetings, and events that help sustain the high-level of coordination and collaboration that has evolved over the last several years between and among government agencies and non-profit organizations.

Volunteers and Voluntary Organizations

The purpose of this priority theme area was to encourage the continued development of an active volunteer corps and Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) program made up of non-governmental agencies in partnership with local government to improve coordination and capabilities in disaster preparedness, response, and long-term recovery.⁵ Community-based and faith-based organizations as well as non-profit service providers that have a role in emergency preparedness, response and/or recovery efforts are now meeting quarterly as part of the **Santa Barbara County Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster** (SBC VOAD). A designated VOAD Coordinator along with a newly-established Executive Committee has developed a database of available resources and personnel, a spontaneous volunteer processing center, as well as comprehensive policies and procedures for member organizations. SBC VOAD has also created a sustainability plan that will guide their organization over the next five years with increased decision-making

⁵ Please note that this priority theme area has been revised since the Initial Needs Assessment conducted in 2007 based on feedback from the Emergency Coordinators Committee.

responsibilities for the Executive Committee and designated liaisons that are being trained to respond to the EOC, upon activation, to coordinate resources.

The Aware & Prepare Initiative has also supported the strengthening of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program as well as the Medical Reserve Corps. Currently, the CERT program is being utilized first and foremost as a public education and awareness program, but will grow in certain jurisdictions to be trained volunteers that are prepared to help themselves and their neighbors during an emergency. Whereas, the MRC is fully trained and equipped to respond to the surge in medical needs during a large-scale emergency or disaster. Membership has doubled over the last three years with the oversight of a full-time MRC Coordinator, and the cadre of volunteers has participated in several trainings and exercises. The MRC has also been able to acquire a cache of medical supplies that is stored in the north county facility of the American Red Cross Santa Barbara County Chapter for easy deployment to that region in the event that transportation is limited.

The majority of survey respondents and interview participants agreed that the strengthening of the SBC VOAD was one of the most significant accomplishments of the Aware & Prepare Initiative. It was also continually highlighted that the re-invigoration of the CERT program has had a tremendous impact on local jurisdictions. However, the greatest concern with sustainability lies in these volunteer-based programs as volunteer management is one of the most time-consuming responsibilities and financial support for these efforts are minimal on the State and Federal level.

Aware & Prepare Program Evaluation Report

The change in level of capabilities to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies and disasters is the main focus of the Aware & Prepare Initiative Program Evaluation; however, there are four other components that were addressed in data collection and analysis including the public-private partnership, value of investment in philanthropic support to government agencies and non-profit organizations, grantmaking processes and procedures, as well as the overall program structure. These components, along with further analysis on the level of emergency management capabilities, and their accompanying outcomes are described in-depth in the comprehensive Program Evaluation Final Report.