UNIT 3: PROMOTING YOUR PROGRAM

In this unit you will learn about:

- **Why We Promote and to Whom We Promote.** The reasons for promoting your program and the different audiences for promotion.

- **The Importance of Partnerships.** Why partnerships are important and possible partners.

- **Program Promotion and Goal Setting.** How program promotion and goal setting tie together.

- **How to Initiate and Foster Partnerships.** The process for developing and maintaining key partnerships.

- **The Promotional Message.** CERT core values to include in promotional messages and how to promote a program to various audiences.

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UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit looks at the reasons and strategies for promoting a CERT program.

At the conclusion of this unit, the participants will be able to describe the purposes and strategies for promoting a local CERT program:

- Explain expected outcomes for program promotion.
- Identify community organizations to target for partnership.
- Identify strategies for developing and maintaining partnerships.
- Explain how the process of goal setting is linked to program promotion.
- Articulate CERT core messages to include in program promotion.
- Identify techniques for promoting a program to various audiences.

This unit will look at:

- Why we promote
- To whom we promote
- How to gain support through partnerships
- The relationship between program promotion and goal setting
- How to initiate and foster partnerships
- The promotional message

WHY WE PROMOTE AND TO WHOM WE PROMOTE

Program promotion is at the top of the list of priorities for CERT Program Managers.

Here is a list of reasons why CERT programs must promote themselves:

- To get the program started
- To get volunteers
- To keep the program visible
- To gain support from the public
- To gain support from potential sponsors
- To gain support from community officials
- To gain support from professional responders
- To educate about the need for preparedness

Every member of the community – from private citizens to businesses to government officials – holds a vital stake in preparedness and response. Regardless of how well a CERT program is organized, it cannot succeed unless it has the support of those stakeholders.

- Sometimes that support is fairly passive. For example, not all potential stakeholders will end up being active CERT members.

- In some cases stakeholders will see the usefulness of having a more active relationship with the CERT program. They see that the CERT program can benefit them and the community.

WHY WE PROMOTE AND TO WHOM WE PROMOTE (CONTINUED)

A CERT program can have benefits for key stakeholders and the community:

- It supports emergency management and its agencies.

- It expands the emergency response capability of the community.

- It is a reliable resource for emergency responders in non-emergency situations.

- It expands home and workplace preparedness.

- It increases neighborhood and workplace involvement with public safety.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS

Potential partners are stakeholders who see the usefulness of having a more active relationship with the CERT program. Partnerships are essential in starting and sustaining a CERT program.

Possible Partners	Benefits to CERT

See the Developing Partners Checklist on the next page.

Some partners – neighborhood / homeowners associations, Neighborhood Watch groups and school groups – are "ready-made" partners. This checklist gives you some ideas of additional partners.

Developing Partners Checklist

The list below provides some suggestions for developing CERT partners. Use this list to help you determine whom you should approach to sell your program.

Type of Organization	Possible Contacts
Business and Industry	☐ Housing complexes ☐ Large employers ☐ Utility companies ☐ Other:
Communications/Media Organizations	☐ Cable providers ☐ Daily and weekly newspapers ☐ Radio stations ☐ Telephone companies ☐ Television stations ☐ Other:
Not-for-Profit Organizations	☐ Benevolent groups (e.g., Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Jaycees) ☐ Civic and service organizations ☐ Other:
Public Interest Groups	☐ American Association of Retired Persons chapter ☐ Chamber of commerce ☐ Environmental groups ☐ Neighborhood associations / Homeowners associations ☐ Neighborhood Watch groups ☐ Parent-teacher organizations ☐ The American Red Cross chapter ☐ Other:
Health Care Providers	☐ Emergency medical services ☐ Hospitals ☐ Managed care facilities ☐ Medical clinics ☐ Other:

Type of Organization	Possible Contacts
Local Government Agencies	☐ Elected and appointed officials ☐ Local emergency management agency ☐ Fire department ☐ Law enforcement agencies ☐ Planning department and zoning board ☐ Public health agency ☐ Public works departments ☐ Other:
Workforce Groups	☐ Professional groups ☐ Union locals ☐ Other:
Education Groups	☐ Daycare and childcare providers ☐ School superintendent ☐ School board members ☐ University and community colleges ☐ Vocational and technical schools ☐ Other:

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS (CONTINUED)

ACTIVITY: DRAFT PROGRAM PLAN: IDENTIFY POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Purpose: This activity allows existing Program Managers to identify organizations that already provide important partnerships and should be maintained. It allows all Program Managers to identify organizations in their community that could be targeted for partnership.

Instructions:

1. Go to the Draft Program Plan in Unit 1.

2. Individually complete the complete the first column of the second section, *Program Partners.*

PROGRAM PROMOTION AND GOAL SETTING

Unit 2 talked about the overlap between setting your program's vision and promoting your program.

- You can't promote your program without having a program vision.

- You can't set the vision for your program without getting input from other people.

- And people can't give you input without knowing about the program.

Think about that overlap in terms of stakeholders and partners.

- The CERT program has a vision and some initial goals.

- The CERT program approaches a potential partner to explain how this new community resource (CERT) could help the partner.

- The CERT program asks for input and incorporates the input into developing the final program goals.

- This process results in stronger support for the CERT program.

PROGRAM PROMOTION AND GOAL SETTING (CONTINUED)

The approach is not used for all program partners. A CERT program has different levels of partners:

- For some of the partners, program promotion and goal setting are tied together.

- For some, you set the goals first and then do the program promotion.

Goal setting and program promotion are tied together for those whose approval is critical to the program's existence.

Goal setting and program promotion are separate for program volunteers and those who are peripherally involved in the program.

ACTIVITY: DRAFT PROGRAM PLAN: PROGRAM PARTNERS AND GOAL SETTING

Purpose: This activity allows Program Managers to review the current and potential partners list and identify whether they should be involved in goal setting.

Instructions:

1. Go to the Draft Program Plan in Unit 1.

2. Individually complete the second column of the second section, *Program Partners,* by indicating whether the partner should be involved in goal setting.

HOW TO INITIATE AND FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS

Recruiting partners is like assembling a successful team. It takes thoughtful planning. Chances are that Program Managers will have only one opportunity to introduce CERT to many potential partners, so they will want their approach to be well thought out.

Up to this point the course has talked about some of the elements in promoting a CERT program:

- Developing good program goals

- Identifying stakeholders and partners

- Describing the possible benefits for both the program and partners

HOW TO INITIATE AND FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS (CONTINUED)

The next step is to examine the process for initiating and fostering partnerships. This process involves five steps:

1. Creating a Program Description

2. Developing a plan for approaching each partner

3. Scheduling one-on-one meetings

4. Maintaining contact

5. Being constantly alert for new partners

#1 CREATE A PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Even before a Program Manager approaches a potential partner, the program must be very clear on what the program is about and what it will do. The best way to do that is by developing a program description, also called a "white paper," that presents the overall approach to the program.

See *What to Include in Your Program Description* on the next page.

What to Include in Your Program Description

The "white paper" should include the information listed below. As you consider your community's needs, you may find other topics that should be included in the "white paper" as well.

Topic	What to Include
Current Situation in the Community	• Threats faced by the community • Population needs • Number of professional responders • How CERTs can augment the response
Program Goals and Expectations	• An overview of what CERTs will do in an emergency or disaster • How CERTs will complement professional responders • How many people will be trained in the first year • An estimate of how many people will be trained over the first 5 years • How skill levels will be maintained
Training Strategy	• Training curriculum (Note: The FEMA curriculum can be augmented if the community faces additional threats to unusual conditions.) • Training methods
Team Organization	• Types of teams: Neighborhood teams, rural area teams, workplace teams, non-profit organization teams, and others • How the Incident Command System (ICS) will be used to manage the CERT response
Linkages with the Existing Response System	• Protocols for "self-activation" and "call out" • Procedures for communicating with professional responders • Level of control by emergency responders

HOW TO INITIATE AND FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS (CONTINUED)

Program Managers will begin by developing a draft program description. The paper will be refined after receiving input from partners. The information in the final program description can be used as you promote your program.

#2 DEVELOP A PLAN FOR APPROACHING EACH PARTNER

You will want to give careful thought to how you will approach each partner that you have targeted for participation.

There are three parts to developing a plan for approaching a partner. Here is what you need to do to prepare for a meeting with a potential partner:

- Research the organization.
- Identify where you can help each other.
- Develop talking points.

See *Develop a Plan Checklist* on the next page.

Develop a Plan Checklist

Research the Organization

1. What does the organization do?

2. What are its concerns relating to disaster and community preparedness?

3. What is its relationship with emergency response?

4. What motivates the organization?

5. Who in the organization might be a champion for CERT?

Identify Where You Can Help Each Other

1. How can CERT benefit the organization?

2. What can the organization offer CERT?

Develop Talking Points from Your Research

1. What the CERT program is

2. What the CERT program can accomplish if supported

3. A clear message on why the organization should participate and how its support will help

4. What the CERT program can provide the organization, e.g., training, materials

5. Committing personal time and perhaps financial resources requires a full understanding of the CERT program. A partner will want to know, "What's in it for me?" The partner will also want to know, "What makes CERT so important?" Have a response ready, including some success stories.

HOW TO INITIATE AND FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS (CONTINUED)

#3 SCHEDULE A ONE-ON-ONE MEETING

The next step is to meet with one or more people from the organization. The purpose of the meeting is to present your talking points.

Here are some reminders about good meeting protocol:

- Be on time.
- Be well prepared (your presentation, copies of an agenda, materials to leave behind, etc.).
- Be clear and concise.
- Make sure to listen as well as talk.
- End the meeting on time.

Follow up the meeting with a letter that:

- Thanks the person you met with
- Briefly repeats your key points
- Indicates when you will contact them again

#4 MAINTAIN CONTACT

Program Managers should identify a contact person with the organization. Communicate regularly with the contact person. The frequency of the contact will depend on the nature of the partnership. For example, sponsors will hear from the Program Manager more frequently than will the president of a Neighborhood Watch group.

HOW TO INITIATE AND FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS (CONTINUED)

Make it a win-win relationship:

- Think of ways that you can promote your partners as you promote the CERT program. For example, if the CERT program has a media opportunity, give credit to the partners.

- Offer services to the partner (for example, training for their members or employees, access to general information on emergency preparedness).

- Make it easy to do business with the CERT program.

#5 BE ALERT FOR NEW PARTNERS

Every community has dynamos in the public and private sector who can lead with powerful effectiveness. The job of recruiting partners is ongoing.

- Keep notes of contacts you make and the possible resources they can provide.

- As you recruit partners, encourage them to identify others who can contribute, personally or financially, to the CERT program.

See *Gaining Support from Local Leaders* on the next page. It provides important information on working with some very important partners – local community leaders.

GAINING SUPPORT FROM LOCAL LEADERS

Regardless of how you fund your program, the support of local elected and appointed officials will be necessary, even if only to support the time that you will spend as Program Manager. In most communities, however, you will need the support of local leaders prior to startup because, ultimately, local leaders control program funding.

To gain the support of local leaders, try the tips listed below:

Do your research first. The more knowledgeable you are about CERTs, what they can do, how much they cost, and the benefits they can provide the community, the more credibility you will have with those who control the decision-making and the purse strings. Use the "white paper" you developed to support your program strategy as your basis to ensure that you can answer as many questions as possible about what CERTs can do for your community's response efforts. Provide several success stories about how CERTs have been used in other (preferably similar) communities.

Determine your approach. As with nearly any program, the CERT Program can be approached in terms of "It's a real resource!" or "It's another new program!" Undoubtedly, the first approach will bring you more success. Be ready to provide examples of how the CERT Program supplements local response resources, and be prepared to explain how you can make that happen in your community.

Offer CERT as a potential resource for multiple agencies. CERT personnel are able and willing to help in a variety of settings. Suggest that they can help with tasks such as installing smoke detectors and batteries, providing medical assistance at local parades and community events, or helping staff fire safety awareness booths at fire station open houses. The more versatile you can show CERTs to be, the more likely it is that you'll gain approval for the program.

Keep elected officials in the loop. Include local elected officials on e-mailing lists or newsletter mailing lists so that they are aware of what you're doing to make CERTs successful and how CERTs are benefiting the community. Keep them aware of the progress you're making – how many CERT members you've trained, how often they have been activated, and whether there is a backlog of requests for training – so that the program stays "on their desks." When your program demonstrates its worth, let the elected officials take the credit. Invite local elected officials and chief officers to hand out certificates at graduation. Look for opportunities to make elected officials a visible part of the program to the community.

Finally, if your CERT program is established but doesn't have the support from local leaders that it needs, try scheduling an exercise or other event to demonstrate how CERTs operate and the benefits that a CERT can offer to the community. Invite local officials to an exercise involving CERT or schedule an exercise in a public place that will gain the attention of the media.

THE PROMOTIONAL MESSAGE

So far this unit has covered why to promote, the benefits of promotion, and to whom to promote. Now it is time to talk about the promotional message.

Remember the key CERT messages:

- Safety, safety, safety; "safety first"
- Teamwork
- Community members helping each other in the neighborhood, workplace, school, other venues
- Valuing volunteers and CERT as an asset to the community
- Preparedness
- Importance of each individual's contribution
- Practice, practice, practice
- Self-sufficiency and problem-solving, rather than the victim role
- Leadership
- Ability to do the greatest good for the greatest number in the shortest amount of time

The promotional message a CERT program uses and how that message is communicated differ depending on the needs of each target audience. What you will say to a large employer and how you communicate it will be different from what you say to a parent-teacher organization and how you communicate it.

THE PROMOTIONAL MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

ACTIVITY: PROMOTING THE CERT PROGRAM

Purpose: This activity breaks participants into small groups to strategize techniques for promoting the program to different audiences.

Instructions:

1. Break into five small groups.

2. A different target audience will be assigned to each small group.

3. Complete the worksheet, *Promoting the CERT Program,* on the next page.

4. Be prepared to describe your plan.

Promoting the CERT Program

Instructions:

Our target audience: _____

Our goal: _____

1. Strategize the messages and techniques you will use to promote your CERT program to this target audience.

2. Remember to consider the needs of each organization (CERT and the partner) and what one has to offer the other.

3. You have 10 minutes.

4. You will report your plan to the whole group.

THE PROMOTIONAL MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

ACTIVITY: DRAFT PROGRAM PLAN: PROMOTING TO TARGET AUDIENCES

Purpose: This activity allows you to record your ideas on what promotional messages and strategies you will use for three partners of your CERT program.

Instructions:

1. Go to the Draft Program Plan in Unit 1.

2. Individually complete the matrix in Section 3, *Promoting to Target Audiences.*

UNIT SUMMARY

This unit has looked at program promotion:

- Why We Promote and To Whom We Promote

- The Importance of Partnerships

- Program Promotion and Goal Setting

- How to Initiate and Foster Partnerships

- The Promotional Message

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