

Bedford, NH CERT Promotes Lifesaving Skills Until Help Arrives

In November 2017, the Bedford, NH, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) offered its first [You Are the Help Until Help Arrives \(Until Help Arrives\)](#) workshop. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designed the program to teach immediate, simple, lifesaving actions to take before first responders arrive on the scene.



Bedford, NH Community Emergency Response Team

Bedford CERT, which started in 2012, maintains 20 active members. Director Paul Brock says the team plays two primary roles. They function as “second responders” and they provide emergency preparedness education. This latter role prompted the Fire Department to reach out to the CERT about this program. Brock jumped at the opportunity for his team to assist with the Until Help Arrives training.

The fire department's request to assist with Until Help Arrives training “...fell perfectly in line with our role of helping to educate the community,” said Brock.

The CERT Board of Directors agreed to implement Until Help Arrives. However, they decided to seek other partners to help engage the community and add credence to the subject matter. Brock and team worked with the local library and area churches to deliver five Until Help Arrives workshops. They also included a local emergency medical technician (EMT).

“We felt it was important to have a 100 percent credible person in front of the audience,” Brock said. “Not that other people in our CERT could not deliver the material, but, we would not have the credibility that an EMT has who can talk about doing things from personal experience.”

Partnering with local meeting places, like libraries and churches, helped them reach the community. “When you do an event, 98 percent of the problem is getting the audience,” Brock said. “Obviously, doing it in partnership with an organization like a church makes the job a whole lot easier. When the pastor stands up and says, ‘I have seen this program from Bedford CERT, and it is good,’ that brings credibility. It helps to get people in the seats.”

Brock also worked with the station manager for Bedford Community Television (BCTV). The station produced a short public service announcement promoting the Until Help Arrives presentations. These promotions and partnerships generated audiences of 20-35 people each time. Afterward, the station manager offered to film the entire presentation to air on BCTV.

“BCTV is in the business of the Bedford community,” Brock said. “That is what they are all about. That is their charter. So, whatever they can do that is of benefit to the Town of Bedford, they are willing to do.”

In the studio, Brock wore two hats. He normally co-presents with the EMT. For the TV version, he also posed questions that an audience member might ask. It took just under two hours to record the program. The station added graphics and edited out any mistakes.

In addition to airing locally, BCTV made the Bedford CERT Until Help Arrives program available to anyone by uploading the content to its [YouTube Channel](#).

Brock recommends the same approach when promoting CERT in general. He says to ask local churches, rotary clubs, or other groups for 10 minutes at their next meeting to pitch the program.

“Get engaged with the existing infrastructure,” he said. “Use what is already in place. Why is Until Help Arrives important to this church, or me? Personalize it a little bit and help people understand how it is meaningful to them. The feedback that we have received from the community has been extremely positive,” Brock said. “The [Until Help Arrives](#) program is really worthwhile.”

To conduct this training in your community, visit the [Until Help Arrives](#) webpage. To learn more about Bedford CERT, visit <https://www.bedfordnhcert.org/>.