

Meeting the Needs of the Asian American and Pacific Islander Communities in Emergency Management

Wednesday, January 30, 2013

3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. EDT

Good afternoon everybody and thank you for joining FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Division webinar series. Today's topic will be meeting the needs of the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities in emergency management. A few technical considerations before we get underway.

This webinar is free and open to the public. A question and answer period will begin following all of the presentations.

This webinar is being recorded and captioned. You will be able to access the recording at the Citizen Corps website. You will find the URL for that website in the participant's tips box to the immediate left of the slide presentation.

Please make sure your speakers are turned up so that you may hear the proceedings sufficiently, with that, I will turn it over to Mr. Marcus Coleman from FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness division.

It sounds like Marcus has dropped off. Kyle Combs from FEMA's Intergovernmental Affairs Division would you like to kick us off.

Hi, This is Kyle Combs with FEMA Intergovernmental Affairs Division. And welcome to this webinar on meeting the needs of Asian American and Pacific Islander communities in emergency management. Preparedness is essential to community resilience. FEMA works to support the preparedness of communities at all levels. Today we will hear about lessons learned and best practices from local governments and community organizations. We also will have a presentation about FEMA's Voluntary Agency Liaisons and how to get connected to them. Now I would like to introduce Audrey Buehring, deputy director of the White House Initiative on Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders to provide some opening comments.

Thank you so much Kyle. And good afternoon everyone. I want to thank the FEMA for organizing this very important webinar and thank you to all the speakers who will be following and sharing the practices around emergency management and their communities.

So for those of you who may not be familiar with our office, I will start with a brief description. When President Obama reestablished the initiative in October of 2009, he affirmed his commitment to the AAPI community to understanding and addressing the issues facing our families, opening doors to federal programs and resources to those in our community who need them most.

So our job is a community -- I'm sorry -- the initiative is to work with our federal partners to determine what resources are available to help improve the quality of your life.

And I often tell people to think of us as being in the business of construction where we build bridges between the community and the federal government, with all the federal agencies we work with, as many as needed so that resources are flowing smoothly without encountering any traffic jams and we put in elevators where we need to lift important issues to the top floor so they can be addressed appropriately. So I hope you let us know when you need bridges and elevators and we will be there to help.

So this webinar today is extremely timely, given that cleanup efforts still continue following Hurricane Sandy, which devastated much of the East Coast three months ago. One thing we found particularly striking following Hurricane Sandy was the coordination that happened at the community and federal levels to address the various needs of the AAPI community from language access to housing to emergency and disaster related loans.

Our Federal and state partners were able to quickly connect the community with the services needed.

In many of the community meetings and town halls that we attended within the past year, one overarching theme that we have repeatedly heard is around disaster preparedness. And how communities can work together with federal government and other partners to make sure that the next hurricane won't be quite so devastating or that the next disaster won't have such an economic toll on their families and communities.

So today rather than having the conversation after the disaster, we are so happy to be here and have a chance to start early before the disaster actually strikes.

So from Hurricane Katrina to the Gulf Coast oil spill to Hurricane Sandy, we discover there so many lessons learned and disaster preparedness efforts all ready happening around the country at the state and local levels. We hope that others can learn from these best practices and potentially replicate them in their own communities.

We look forward continuing this dialogue with all of you and thank you again for participating; and for sharing your stories for best practices and lessons learned. Thanks so much.

They could very much Audrey. This is Marcus Coleman again from FEMA ICPD. We would now like to hand it over to our first presenter, and that is Ms. Yu from the Asian American Federation. And we will have her go-ahead.

Hello everyone thank you so much to FEMA for inviting me to participate today. As Audrey mentioned, we are still working through the relief part of Sandy. We feel like we're not quite there for the recovery phase. But I am very grateful for all the help that we have received from the agencies, from all of our friends and partners from throughout the country. And we continued to -- we hope to continue to work with you.

First slide.

So just to give you a little overview of New York City Asian American community; Asian-Americans are the fastest-growing population in our city. We make up almost 14% of the city's population and while they are identifiable Asian American enclave, the population is pretty well dispersed throughout the city. There are over 12 nature Asian images and dialects spoken. And a lot of our residents say that language and cultural barriers remain significant issues for them.

So looking back -- I think we need to -- I want to share some of the challenges that we have. I think the very first hurdle in getting help to those most impacted with the storm geographic impact, coupled with the language diversity. And of course the immigration status of those impacted added to the confusion. While there were some programs for undocumented immigrants, they were not all eligible or they are not eligible for all the government relief programs so I think there are still some confusion and some private resources going to assist those families.

Some of the challenges for the very tools that we talk about on a regular basis. Translations, some translations were too formal. And it's not spoken; it was colloquial terms used by the community. I think as we think about working together to meet some of the emergencies and we need to think about how best to explain it in the language that is most familiar to the community.

Some of the cultural competence of folks trying to help, private and public partnerships, a lot of them don't work in the community so despite their sincerity and all efforts, there were certain issues. For instance, there were meals given out to the Muslim community in Brooklyn and people were trying to figure out why they were not able to accept the meals and it's because a lot were religious restrictions so certainly there are some of these gaps need to understand.

Other issues were some of the communication channels but I think a lot of folks who came in to help, they did not know or have access to the vast ethnic media outlets that we use in New York City.

And also the confusion that led to accurate and timely information. There was some confusion in the beginning and so there were a lot of issues with fraud. There were people advertising saying if you come to me and give me X number of dollars I can help you and make sure you get the FEMA grant.

So people did not know about that; what that meant. And there was not enough information. So a lot of people were victims of this type of fraud.

And the process itself, was a challenge. The application itself with overwhelming. The follow-up to get status is overwhelming. And the lack of a streamlined application process has been the comment that we have been hearing from the community.

And the hurricane actually pointed out the existing problems with the community; the problems with overcrowding; the lack of access to affordable housing; to the lack of mental health services

and underemployment in certain populations. So the storm exacerbated a lot of or highlighted a lot of the existing different problems in the community

So what worked? What worked was the use of the networks of national and local groups, government leaders, funders and other stakeholders who were able to share information, and connect us to agency staff, identify community partners and to find us new leaders. And groups to work with.

Number two, conveners. What worked also conveners to connect groups to the public and private resources. A lot of folks on the front line were needed resources very quickly and needed support to buy supplies and have access to hire more staff and there were certain conveners who were able to connect resources to the various folks in the front lines.

Also what also worked with the willingness of agencies to meet and work with community groups. All the supervisors from the different boroughs with from FEMA had a chance to work with all the Asian-American groups doing the frontline Sandy relief work. And closed door meeting very sincere. People were very earnest. And they had a great discussion about what both sides are seeing in how they come together. And I think everybody walked away feeling like it was a very productive to our conversation.

What also worked are the community internal networks to disseminate information ,whether it be our own internal e-mail list, ethnic media, whatever outlets we have we were able to use that, so it was an opportunity for us to get the proper information out to people.

And some of the recommendations that we have. Disaster -- one is to prepare and plan. A disaster; everybody should have a disaster recovery plan. I think after a disaster or when a disaster is hitting is certainly not the time for you to think about oh do we need to, would we need to do. Our building sits on the very edge of the island. And when the storm hit, we had problems with data backup and recovery, phone systems and how to have access. A lot of people down here are still not functioning, so one of the things that we realize everybody needs to have a recovery plan. How to communicate with each other, how to communicate with your group. Also to convene regional and local trainings to share best practices. To help share information about what other people are doing. And how we can share some of the resources available.

And a recommendation; the second recommendation is to build our own networks of regional and local partners. Secondary partners such as places of worship, civic family organizations, schools, local businesses; we found that in a lot of the neighborhoods that did not have a community group that places of worship and schools were some of the very first places that impacted families went. So we realize that this is a very important channel that we need to develop and to explore partnerships with.

Also to build our own network of national partners to share expertise and to share some of the burden.

Some of the national groups housed in DC were the very first ones to reach out to say what do you need for us to do and some of us doing the work it was very difficult to do all the parts.

There were so many moving pieces. And so it was really great for somebody to offer or to use one of our networks to take some of the relief off of all the work.

And during the disaster the use of social media to share information, to gather volunteers and collect resources. Everybody was on Facebook, twitter and it was just amazing and very powerful tool to get information out.

And finally to proactively reach out to public and private partners for assistance. People have been very gracious and giving words of encouragement have been great. People are always willing to help if you ask for it. Sometimes they don't know when the best time to jump in is so I think that is important to ask people to help out when you are facing these challenges.

So thank you so much. Can I just add that I want to point out a lot of the photos that I used in presentation are actually from the community groups in New York City who has been doing the disaster work so I want to thank them and give them a little shout out for all the great work that they continue to do.

So thank you very much

Thank you very much Joy and I thank the Asian-American Federation for all the work that they're doing and for the valuable insight. I think you touch on a very important point is that it's important to have those relationships at a local level and we want to pass it onto Adrienne Pon who's going to talk about the local government perspective the best practices in promoting preparedness and community resilience for diverse populations. Ms. Pon.

Thank you and I want to thank FEMA for including us in this conversation. I think that last point about the relationship with the community is so key to everything that we're trying to do from a local government perspective. Let's go to the first slide.

So this is San Francisco go at a glance, we are a transit and financial hub. We have a large population in a very small area; we are only 47 mi.². But we have the second highest density of any major US city. There is a high cultural linguistic diversity that we speak over 112 different languages in the area. And it is extremely diverse. We have a large hard to reach and hard to count population. San Francisco is one of the 50 US cities with the hardest to count population; there is a high cost of living, and widening very noticeable economic disparity. We also have an aging population and outmigration of children or families with children who are school age, poor and African-American.

This is just a snapshot of the different languages spoken at home. So as you can see, about 44% of the city speaks a language other than English at home. And 13% of San Francisco households are considered linguistically isolated. We also have one of the nation's strongest language access ordinances and it has many, many requirements, but even with those requirements, it is always challenging for a city department to meet the needs of the community.

In this kind of says it all in a snapshot, AG Holder said in 2011 that it does not matter if it is an emergency or is routine business, our success as government really depends on effectively

communicating with members of the public. And you have got to provide everyone accurate timely and vital information. Same time, same place and in the same manner.

So this is just a snapshot of some of the situations that we consider crisis emergency or public safety, and as you can see, we have had, these are some examples that happened within the last few years, two fires six months apart in Chinatown with no interpreters for the monolingual or LEP mostly senior victims. High-profile assaults on Asians and monolingual residents in parts of the city where the dynamics or demographics are changing. Cultural role linguistic differences that escalate into racial conflicts. Many of you may have seen the infamous YouTube video of two women on a bus in Chinatown fighting, one African-American and one Asian, that actually resulted in a fist fight. And a widespread community here of ICE raids; officer involved shooting, in public protests, in addition to that accidents, disaster, safety and health dangers.

So this was the headline from The New York Times we had a situation in an area of the city where the population has shifted from 64% African-Americans to now over 50% Asian and Pacific Islanders. And there are some racial tensions. There were few high-profile assaults and homicides in the area that all happened within the matter of three months and the community just had enough and made its voice heard, but of course the headlines in the national news was that we had racial tensions and riots

Also widespread fear of ICE raids. This was just a standard municipal rail road fare inspection.

This happens that we had six fare inspectors come on a bus in the Mission District where you have a large population of Latinos. And there happened to be six police officers standing outside of the bus. And one of our commissioners was on the bus within 5 minutes she got 15 texts on her cell phone saying it is an ICE raid and people were just panicking. And there was no ability and part of the problem was there was no notification except in English that they were doing these fare inspections and just want people to pay their fair share of the muni fare.

This is a more recent one. Huge water main break last year in an area where 55% of the residents speak Chinese only, and there were no bilingual emergency staff available there. They had many emergency workers but no one spoke the language, no bilingual public notices were posted. And this is a large sink hole that all of a sudden, those are a lot of fun and San Francisco but it was very, very challenging for the community to deal with but because mothers could not get to their children in the house and they did not know which way to go and nobody could tell them in their language what to do.

So we patterned in San Francisco, we have an engagement model that just is really patterned after a very successful 2010 census outreach. And it involves citywide involvement and engagement inclusion and partnership collaboration and coordination not with just the community but within city department and across sectors. Community stewardship as you can see in the case of New York the community really provided the leadership in the emergency. Well-planned locally executed efforts that reach all segments of the community. And we learned during the census that you really have to focus on where the vulnerable and hard to count hard-to-reach populations are. And in filling the government outreach gaps with diverse grassroots

efforts, and having adequate planning, preparation, staff resources in advance of any emergency or situation.

And then some engagement best practices; you really have to know what the community needs are. You have to access, evaluate, and document these needs. Community organizations need to help with us and let us know the needs are so that the city can respond to them.

And then on the city's part building and investing in community-based leadership capacity and voice. Really thinking outside the box; employing some street smart relevant and creative approaches to engage the community, not really relying on mainstream media but alternative ways of reaching individuals. They may not have cell phones or televisions in their house; leveraging all of our resources and networks that was said earlier, the city, community, business and institutional assets.

Building the city capacity to more effectively, communicate with and deliver services to diverse and limited English proficient residents. And ensuring that when in the delivery of the services, that there is cultural and linguistic competency and language access. That is one of the things that my office is responsible for citywide.

And then finally I think most important planning for language access needs as a regular part of doing business; not just during a crisis and waiting for the next emergency to happen, this is the way that government needs to be communicating with its people all the time.

So just a little bit about our office; we provide in-house language services, interpretation and translation work in four different languages, Cantonese, Mandarin, Spanish and Russian and this is on a 24/7 365 basis. This is anything from an emergency town hall meetings, large meetings, large gatherings like the mayor's budget town hall, crisis emergency public safety situations.

And then we monitor all city departments on compliance with the law. We provide technical assistance and training both to the community and to city departments. We manage a telephonic language services contract. Our clearinghouse for templates and tools. And then we do provide direct resident assistance.

We also, now this is very unusual I think for most cities, this is a ground crew of community ambassadors. The goal of this team is to really ensure safe, informed and inclusive communities. And this resulted from the racial conflicts that happened three years ago that we developed and this was Mayor Lee idea a multilingual, a multicultural team to assist, educate and inform residents, workers and transit riders. And they are out on the street five day a week. Monday through Friday, helping our residents and speaking the languages that are spoken in the area. They also provide a visible safety presence in high crime and racially diverse areas. And they really were trying to role model positive behaviors and interactions.

But more important they distribute information out to the community in language. It could be how you use the transit system. It could be emergency services, disaster recovery and preparation information on how to put together an emergency kit.

So there are many flexible applications to their use.

And I believe there is one final slide. And this is just a snapshot of our office; we really are geared towards promoting civic participation and inclusive policies particularly for residents who are vulnerable, immigrant, underserved. We work with public housing residents. And we are trying to bridge some of the linguistic and cultural barriers to ensure that our diverse residents have the same kind of access to city services especially during an emergency can participate and contribute. And that is the conclusion of my presentation. Thank you so much.

Thank you very much Adrienne. And I think you made a very good point that it is important that we look at these opportunities, or these challenges as opportunities to kind of be innovative with our state and local partnerships as well as our nongovernment partners. It is my same esteemed pleasure to introduce one of the 2012 Individual and Community Preparedness Division award winners for youth preparedness actually. And they're going to talk a little more about the program and we have Miss Judy Chang who serves as the youth program coordinator for Single Room Occupancy in San Francisco.

Judy.

Thank you. First I want to thank you all and thank FEMA for inviting us to this conversation. Again my name is Judy representing the Chinatown Community Development Center. So today I am here to share some of the best practices for the youth program in disaster preparedness.

Chinatown CDC is a community development organization serving primarily the Chinatown neighborhood and other neighborhoods in San Francisco.

We play the role of the neighborhood advocate, community organizer especially with the youth which I will later highlight, planners, developers and managers of public housing.

As Resident Service coordinator serving over 18 buildings, they do fire drills once a year with the help of the resident council or floor captains to practice evacuating buildings and have received emergency packet in 2010 and 2001 that the -- 2011.

Right now some of the staff are nurturing and are in the process of working with the tenant councils to build a post central hours plan with the residents.

And in addition to the organization, we are part of the Chinatown SRO collaborative with Chinese Progressive Association's which started 10 years ago. The movement to do fire preventions workshop started in the late 90s when a lot of fires happening in the Mission neighborhood and the Mission neighborhood, Mission SRO Collaborative started collaborating with the fire department to bring the workshop to where the residents are to educate and bring awareness of fire safety and prevention. Chinatown SRO Collaborative followed. As of today we are doing 12 workshops on fire and 12 workshops on earthquake per agency with the earthquake preparedness we the youth are in charge of doing it. And we do workshops for fire we try to recruit two building coordinators to be part of our liaisons to help us monitor and report issues of the buildings and also help with drills when needed.

Our highlight for today, we went to share about the Youth for Single Room Occupancies. And for youth run youth led service learning leadership project. With mostly immigrants youth who are trilingual in English, Cantonese and Mandarin.

They were asked to help with the fire prevention workshop at the SRO buildings to help translate in 2009.

That they have recognized was that -- [Indiscernible] was touched on but not really much in depth. And feel that more information should be on it, since it such a major issue and something it can happen anytime in San Francisco. They wrote a grant themselves and received funding to develop their own curriculum, bilingual curriculum and also they purchased emergency kits for participating units.

Just before I go on to the program to show what is a single room occupancy residential hotel. They are temporary housing for a bachelor society. Small rooms as well as a 8 by 10 with communal kitchens, bathrooms and kitchens. Really not meant for seniors aging or for families to raise their children; as you can see a lot of; because it is so small they move a lot of stuff out in the hallways where it becomes a hazard when it comes to emergencies. Therefore they need to educate and bring awareness to these residents.

Again youth program started when we were invited to take part in the fire prevention workshop. And since then they have developed curriculum to be a trainer or presenter themselves. The youth had to go through the San Francisco N.E.R.T training; first CPR or hands-on CPR and also gain the disaster preparedness instruction by Red Cross. And go through meeting facilitation and public speaking before they can go out and do presentations at other events.

Once again with our model is they go to where the people are gathering such as in their buildings, community events and such. With the curriculum when it built it, they had thirty minutes on earthquake or one hour per curriculum on fire prevention and earthquake disaster preparedness.

With that, also we work with Chinatown resident we work with Chinatown Resident coordinators to do fire drills and other buildings and also go back to buildings where we also did workshops already to remind the residents and also practice with them had to evacuate the building. Also to really remember to prepare an emergency bag and carry with them.

Some of the community partnerships we have are with the UCSF SRO CHIPS. This is a group of UCSF medical students who are working towards getting more of the population in the community prepared in disasters and also giving them skills such as injured victims or using household items for basic aid. So we're helping them with interpretation and assist in skills practice. NICOS is another community organization with five forms in five major health groups in Chinatown. Basically after 1989 [Indiscernible] disaster preparedness community in Chinatown CDC is part of it.

And we have been taking advantage of taking their training such as Chinese N.E.R.T training and also HAM radio. And also with their ICS drill practice in Chinatown. So we're getting our youth partnered with them and being part of the process.

And then as in addition to what we're doing we are in the process of building more emergency kits [Indiscernible] to when we go to different buildings. And having bilingual door hangers teaching residents how to use them in case of emergency when they evacuate the building whether to get out safely or whether they need assistance from rescuers.

Also we utilize buying different materials for outreach and workshops.

Taking advantage of community affairs to pass that information and also with the workshops with the UCSF medical students we are using materials for the intergenerational bonding events with seniors. And part of your youth also having a project to work with seniors on a monthly basis to bring them companionship for two hours and [Indiscernible] [Indiscernible - muffled speaker] outreach to seniors.

And just recently we have been working with USCF students to build a curriculum on winter safety tips such as handwashing and how to prevent the spread of germs and winter safety for seniors.

So that is about what we have been in doing since 2009 and what we have been working towards in building stronger community and connecting the community in disaster preparedness. Thank you.

Thank you very much Judy. We know that there maybe some of you on this webinar that have programs at a local level and be looking to do certain programs with youth as well. I will make a quick plug; we actually have technical assistance available for you for youth preparedness programs and we will provide the contact information to the end. I think one of the important things Judy actually touched on was again the importance of relationships and working in public private partnership or partnership with other voluntary agencies; which leads us to our last presenter, Mr. Michael Kearns who serves as one of the FEMA's Voluntary Agency Liaisons. It is an invaluable resource that we have available all across the country and I will pass it over to Michael.

Thanks, Marcus.

I think we have heard some great examples of some of the successes and challenges meeting the needs of Asian-American and Pacific Islander communities. But I want to reiterate one of those recommendations again that Marcus touched on is getting connected and building those relationships in advance. Now before a disaster happens.

And one of the best ways to get plug-in is through the FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaison so let me back up a minute to explain what we mean by voluntary agencies. This is just our term used to refer to any nonprofit, community-based organization or faith-based organizations that voluntarily choose to provide some form of disaster services. That includes organizations

working at all levels whether it as a local church or organization working within the community or a statewide, nonprofit or even national or international relief organizations. We refer to those all as voluntary agencies. Next slide please.

So what does FEMA VALs, Voluntary Agency Liaisons do? It's our role to help build those relationships amongst all those organizations that I mentioned and government at all levels. Federal level, state, territorial level, local and tribal governments and FEMA VALS do that by providing information, best practices, technical assistance, and resources to the community.

And the primary mechanism we have for engaging the community in that relationship building process is VOAD, the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster.

And VOAD exists at various levels. It's a national organization and it's over hundred numbers in the national level including agencies such as the Salvation Army, the Red Cross, Feeding America, Catholic Charities, Latter-day Saint Charities, Sachu Foundation and on and on. And then again at the statewide level you will have representatives from some of those national organizations as well as state specific non profits and faith based organizations.

And then at the regional or local level you have again local nonprofits and representatives from some of those nationwide organizations as well.

For example in the Hurricane Sandy affected areas of New York you had a regional VOAD in New York City and a regional VOAD in Long Island. You have the New York State VOAD and again the National VOAD. And those networks all work together. And FEMA VALS work with all of those VOAD networks as well as other faith based, nonprofit, community and other volunteer organizations to help expand and build their capabilities to undertake activities and all the different phases of the emergency management system.

So this is just one model or diagram of comprehensive emergency management, that you will see that there are five different phases. You will notice in the bottom that there is a timeline in green on the bottom and in the middle there is an arrow or line that represents when an event happens. And everything to the left are activities that we undertake before the disaster and everything to the right of the line are disaster activities that come after the event.

Moving from the bottom up you will see that the recovery phase comes with a disaster happens and they continue for quite some time as the community tries to rebuild and repair and create some new sense of normal for the community.

The response phase is those activities that happen immediately after a disaster; the sheltering, the feeding, as well as some of those activities that happen right before a disaster. Such in the instance of a hurricane, and we have some kind of advance notice that the storm is coming and so we evacuate the population or stage supplies in the area, so those response activities happen immediately surrounding the event.

The top three phases of the of emergency management are not tied to a specific incident and you can see -- they are ongoing and you can see that the arrows represent that -- moving both ways.

So we're always doing things to mitigate or lessen the impact of a disaster that they might have or trying to help the communities get ready and prepare for the next disaster and we are always doing things to help prevent the disaster from happening in the first place.

So let's take a look at what FEMA VALs are doing in these various stages of disaster and how you might get plugged into your FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaison.

Because those top three phases are not tied to a specific disaster and their ongoing processes, you can kind of lump us together - the prevention, preparedness and mitigation.

Your FEMA VALs are supporting the VOAD networks and volunteer agencies in educating the community and getting individuals prepared and techniques that they can prepare for their home or building mechanisms to help mitigate the events and disasters.

We are also engaging the whole community in the process as we do outreach to make sure that all sectors of the community are engaged in the planning process. In the testing and exercising of those plans. And developing and providing training, it is critical. Especially in the segment of the community that have not had traditional access to power or emergency management that we really do average and get them connected.

So that those in emergency management have an accurate picture of what the assets are within the community and what the needs are in all different sectors of the community

In the response phase, Voluntary Agency Liaisons are helping to coordinate those - again the mass care activities, the feeding and sheltering and evacuations. VALs are providing guidance to the non profits and local emergency management on how to manage that outpouring of donations and volunteer that comes after the disaster. We do outreach to identify and report on the activities of the nonprofit and community organizations. You might have a VAL approach your organization to find out what services you are providing to your clients, to find out what needs you've see in the community, see what damages you might have reported. And its important to follow those things up as we want to make sure those who are allocating resources in making decisions about how to manage the response have an accurate assessment and picture and situational awareness of what is happening in the entire community.

Finally, FEMA VALs support the implementation of assistance programs. We have heard from some of the other speakers how challenging the application process can be. So FEMA VALs are your resource to help you advocate for your clients and your constituents in negotiating that process for receiving federal assistance.

In the recovery phase, FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaisons help communities identify what the best long term recovery strategies are. We help communities in creating long term recovery groups. We help those groups set up systems for disaster case management. And putting in place mechanisms and compiling the resources to address the unmet needs of individuals within the community. Whether that rebuilding or repairing their homes or moving debris. Often the individuals will have exhausted the government aid that is available and so it is left to the voluntary agencies again to provide the network so that people don't fall through the cracks and

those that don't receive government assistance or have maxed out the government assistance are connected in those unmet needs categories.

So FEMA VALs again help in all sectors of the community in that process of planning and developing recovery groups and strategies.

FEMA VALs have the same core values as our National VOAD partners. Those are the four C's of VOAD - cooperation, communication, coordination and collaboration. And that is our mantra when we are trying to build relationships and connect with the community. I might throw one other C, and that would be connection. Again you heard over and over again the recommendation to get connected and build those relationships now. So you can get connected to your VOAD at the local or state level on their website, www.nvoad.org, click on your state. So please get connected to your VOAD and please do get connected to your Voluntary Agency Liaison.

This is how to contact each of your VALs, Voluntary Agency Liaisons in each of the 10 FEMA regions and as well as the Pacific area office here in Honolulu, and in the Caribbean division in Puerto Rico. And when there's a Presidential declared disaster FEMA also has a cadre of reservists, VALs that we call up and deploy to the disaster area. They are based out of joint field offices so you might see those VALs as well engaging specifically in the community after a disaster.

So please do get connected, you will see on a file share portion of the webinar that you can download this list of contacts as well as brochures about FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaisons and what we do. So please make sure that we are collectively getting connected, building relationships and make sure that we are meeting the needs of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the community. Thank you.

Thank you very much Michael. So one of the things that we want to make sure that we reinforce as FEMA, that this is just the beginning of our contribution to the conversation.

We know that these programs have been going on for quite some time not with just the Asian American and Pacific Islander community but the whole community. And one of the things I want to provide you all with is an opportunity for how you can continue to be involved and continue to be engaged. And with that I will pass it over to Kyle on some steps that you all can take today.

Kyle.

Thank you all for participating in today's webinar focused on creating preparedness and resiliency in diverse communities. As we close we want to leave you with some steps that you all can take today. First visit ready.gov to learn how you and your family can get prepared this website focuses on key elements to preparedness including get informed on actions to take regarding emergencies and disasters. Making a plan that considers your risks. Building a kit with basic items you may need during an emergency and getting involved with your community to encourage preparedness at all levels.

We also want to highlight National Severe Weather Preparedness Week which is sponsored by FEMA and the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, NOAA.

The national week is March 3 through the 9th, but in addition we want to provide resources for state and community specific severe weather preparedness weeks that may fall outside the national week.

This campaign is a nationwide effort to increase awareness of severe weather and to encourage individuals, families, businesses and communities to know the risks, take action and be an example for others in the community.

We are calling on you to be a force of nature by taking the pledge to prepare at the listed link. Knowing your risk, taking action and being an example are just a few of the steps you can take to be better prepared and assist in saving lives. Studies have shown that individuals are most likely to take preparedness steps if they observe the preparations taken by others. And social media provides the perfect platform to model preparedness actions for others.

And for this reason we are asking you to take the pledge to prepare.

Additionally please visit FEMA's multilingual website. This site provides preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation information in 21 languages including Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese and Chinese just to name a few.

In knowing what to do for you and your families is important and we also hope that you take the opportunity to get involved with these efforts in your local community and promote a whole community approach to community resilience. Building community resilience requires close coordination between the government and community organizations, individuals, and emergency managers to plan for the needs of the whole community.

That's where our Citizens Corp Councils and the National Preparedness Coalition can help. Citizen Corps is FEMA local grassroots strategy to bring together government and community leaders to involve citizens in an all hazards emergency preparedness and resilience.

Citizen Corps ask you to embrace the personal responsibility to be prepared, to get training first aid and emergency skills and to volunteer to support local emergency responders, disaster relief and community safety.

The National Preparedness Coalition is the nation's public online forum organized to improve our nation's resilience against all hazards. It is comprised of individuals engaged in preparedness, and those who want to be engaged in preparedness who are committed to strengthening, sustaining and enhancing the resilience of their communities.

Coalition managers pledged to take actions that will strengthen their own personal, family and community preparedness capabilities.

Coalition members bridge the gap between all levels of government and the public through emergency preparedness education and events. By expanding the emergency management team to include entire communities, coalition managers help improve national preparedness and resilience.

Thank you again for being part of today's webinar. We're going to be opening up to questions now for our presenters. And a new screen will soon appear so if you have any questions please type them in the chat box.

I just want to reinforce that if there are any other tools or topics that you would like to hear from us or any tools that you know of locally that you think would be good to share with other folks, please e-mail it to citizencorps@dhs.gov. We will provide the e-mail in the Q&A section as well.

I will pass it back over to Steve who walks us through the Q&A process.

Thank you very much Marcus. And as Kyle said we are now moving into the question-and-answer time of our webinar.

You should see a blank chatbox on your screen. You can feel free to pick in your questions that you might have regarding the webinar and we will do our best to choose your questions and assign them to the appropriate presenter.

As you are typing in your questions, I would like to note that directly to the left of the Q&A box is a file share box. Here you can download the presentation that you saw today, as well as some other documents provided by the FEMA Voluntary Liaison Agency office including contact map of this presentation, a VAL brochure and a VAL brochure in the Chinese language.

The first question is from Jonathan Jin he is asking how he can get follow-up information or webinar on this together topic. You can sign up for Citizen Corps newsfeed releases as well as our weekly community preparedness e-brief. I would encourage you to visit [WWW.ready.gov/Citizen Corps](http://WWW.ready.gov/Citizen%20Corps). And I will put that link up there. And there you can sign up for our newsfeeds as well as our twitter feed and any other tools and resources to help you stay on top of things.

While we're waiting for additional questions one of the other things I want to add is that we actually have the Ready website available in multiple languages as well. And you can actually find those links on www.ready.gov. And we will provide a list of links to those that attended this webinar as well.

I will provide the email address for Citizen Corps. I will provide that for folks to use if they have certainly any follow-up questions, after this webinar ends or any questions about preparedness in general. Feel free to please email Citizen Corps and we will get back with me.

I see that there is a question from Tom Evans. Hi, this is Elinor, as a Pacific Islander, without the exception of FEMA, I feel that many perceive the Asia-Pacific initiative is focused primarily to

Asians. How about the Pacific Islanders? Do you have any specific projects in San Francisco or New York etc. geared to the Pacific islanders?

While we wait for the presenters I will just mention that we're actually doing a youth preparedness workshop in the Pacific Island community. We are actually in two places this week; we are in Guam during a preparedness workshop and also are in CNMI doing a youth preparedness awareness workshop as well. And that is helping to strengthen youth preparedness programming on a local level in the Pacific Islander community. I don't know if our colleagues from either New York or San Francisco want to provide any insight that may be applicable to the communities in the Pacific Islander area.

This is Adrienne from San Francisco. My office is currently not doing any projects with Pacific Islanders, but we do have so many groups here in San Francisco where we have a lot of coalitions and some of the coalition members are working specifically with the PI community.

I think we have not been approached yet, what we are looking to do some pilot projects with emerging or vulnerable communities that often get overlooked.

Hello Elinor, this is Audrey from the White House Initiative on AAPI. We try to focus on Pacific Islanders and we have done a lot of work with Pacific Islands itself for example Guam and Mariana Islands and so forth and we have held events in Salt Lake City Utah and the Los Angeles area with health events focused on Pacific Islanders but we would welcome an ideas you have and collaborations that you would like to pursue in the future with us. I would encourage you to e-mail us at the White House, and I will see if I can send this out over the web chat as well. But its WhiteHouseaapi@ed.gov to connect with us on that.

Mrs. Joanne from New York City, like San Francisco we don't have any programs specifically for Pacific Islanders. But I think it's because the population is very small here but we are willing to include them in anything that we do and be able to work with any Asian-American -- Asian-Pacific Islander groups.

Audrey, would you mind just saying that URL one more time and I will post it.

It's our e-mail address which is whitehouseaapi@ed.gov or you can also visit our website that is www.WhiteHouse.gov/aapi.

Thank you very much. It look like we have another question from Heidi Rosofsy, with the Asian-Pacific Islander communities I want to be able to approach these groups with some level of cultural competency ,where can I learn more to be able to approach the community appropriately? Do you have some tips on who and how are best first contact points?

Hi, this is Joanne from New York City again. I think the Asian American Federation would be a good place to start. We would certainly happy to introduce you to the groups doing the ground breaking work for the city. In the thing there's also a similar -- I'm sure there is similar organizations in the other major urban hubs. And if not then there certainly national groups who have a list of all the great nonprofit community organizations and community leaders that you

can get connected with so that way they can help make the introductions and to folks to give you access.

And this is Adrienne in San Francisco. I think one way to start establishing a relationship is go into the communities, attend events, public events. Include the community in your own activities. You don't necessarily have to go in the door with full cultural competency. I think some sensitivity and respect for the community; and the willingness to work with community leaders who then will introduce you to others in the community; and really relying on trusted members of the community that can introduce you in there and coming to the community with resources and things that can be helpful to that community.

And we have a question for Marguerite Davis. Hello from the Red Cross in North Carolina, how can we get detailed information on cultural needs for these populations during disasters?

Hello this is Judy from San Francisco. How we work is we go to where the community forums are such as in San Francisco we have monthly meetings and we go to where they are and ask questions, do presentations and go from there to build the relationship about their needs. Same with senior citizens, we have meal sites, so we go where they are and work with them.

And I think as all the speakers have mentioned, this is Joanne from New York. I think reaching out to the communities during disasters may not be the ideal time to introduce yourself I think, building relationships and trying to figure out who is where and knowing your community leaders and creating that network before a disaster happens; before an emergency certainly helps.

And as the speaker from San Francisco mentioned bringing resources and you know wanting to share information and being respectful in the community, I think that is a great way to start getting to know who we are.

And there's actually a great follow-up question to what you just said Joanne from Paula Johnson have any of the speakers met with community organizations to provide an overview or share their emergency plans and obtain feedback for any possible gaps? So you note that it is a good tactic to take and meeting with community organizations before disaster strikes is anything you would like to expand upon specifically that you have done in New York City with certain community organizations?

So Asian-American Federation is a nonprofit umbrella for about 44 community organizations that serve the Asian-Pacific Islander community. We have not had a debrief, I think we're all looking forward to that because the FEMA deadline is now February 27, we thought it was going to be this Monday. I think everybody is continuing to do this work. And so one of the things that we all decided that we like to sit down together and do a community discussion and debrief together and then see certainly one of the recommendations from that will be how do we do our own disaster recovery and share best practices and create resources. We're actually working on that. Right now it is still a little crazy. And we're hoping to get to that soon.

Thank you very much. And I just want to touch on one important point, and we have some folks that are part of our Citizen Corps programs and CERT programs locally and they were asking,

somebody had asked the question about just how some of these programs gotten off the ground. And I want to ask the San Francisco Development Group specifically, how were you able to get your program started and how are you working with the local community to keep the programs going.

This is Judy again.

For us it's because working with the SRO Collaborative Group and the fire department first because of the language needs our youth -- [Indiscernible - muffled speaker] [Indiscernible - low volume] trilingual in many languages, came into play and helping the translation. From there the youth kind of gained their own skills and start recognizing [Indiscernible] preparedness. From there is the initiative, like I said they wrote their first grant and received funding from there on and that's how they start working progressively, learning more what SF NERT, the Red Cross , medical students and also with [Indiscernible - low volume] ICS command system and also the HAM radio.

It really started when there is a need for us, for youth to be part of it because they have language abilities. They also have access to a lot of volunteers. So when we had to do drills and other [Indiscernible] the conveners were able to gather a lot of helpers to do presentation. And especially because they have the energy and the passion to be part of the community change improvement.

Judy, you had mentioned HAM radio and what you just said and that is actually a good segue to a question that I see from Robert Colleser, Jr., what about amateur radio as a communications tool when Internet or social media resources aren't available. Can you go into more detail about how you are using HAM radio in San Francisco?

With a ham radio we just start learning it. The youth went to the first workshops to get an introduction, get tested and get certified in using the HAM radio. And they have completed the whole series. And with my understanding with the NICOS disaster preparedness committee and they have been working with different organizations and having different sites and preparing different community members to be trained and also have drills to test out the radio and whether the communications are working or not.

Very good and we have about -- we have time for about one more question from Tracy Huettner. Will presenters contact info also be given for further questions or follow-up ideas?

Tracy if you want to e-mail Citizen Corps at CitizenCorps@DHS.gov with any follow-up questions that you have, we will be happy to forward your questions to the appropriate presenter on today's webinar and connect you with them that way.

And I will turn it back over to Marcus Coleman to close us out.

We want to thank everybody, I want to give it over to Kyle and think I'll very much for the vision and the diligence in pulling this all together. Kyle, if you want to close us out.

Thank you all for participating again and hope I this will be the first in a series. So if anybody participating today has any comments regarding future webinars, for Asian American or Pacific Islanders topics please let me know, my contact information was in the slides with the FEMA Intergovernmental Affairs Office of the second to last slide. Again thank you all. Have a great day.

Event concluded