



**INNOVATION EXCHANGE
RESEARCH REGIONAL STEWARDSHIP
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Project Title: Disaster Preparedness for Vulnerable Populations,

Keywords: Emergency Preparedness, Disaster

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Project Description:

Disaster Preparedness for Vulnerable Populations (DPVP) was a multi-year action–research partnership that combined a service learning outreach program with a pre-post telephone survey of a vulnerable population, seniors in San Francisco who are recipients of home care from In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), to better prepare them for the inevitability of an earthquake. The key partner in the program was the San Francisco IHSS Public Authority, which assigns home care providers to eligible individuals. The Public Authority funded the evaluation of the project to complement the outreach which was supported by the Bay Area Super Urban Area Security Initiative (SUASI).

Objectives:

1. Determine the level of preparedness for an earthquake of in-home seniors in San Francisco.
2. To determine the most effective means of communicating preparedness information to this population
3. To determine the effectiveness of university student outreach to them

Quantifiable/Qualifiable Outcomes:

1. Developed a four dimensional scale measuring preparedness (Self-Perceived Preparedness, Actual Preparedness with a Plan, Actual Preparedness with Supplies, Ability to Evacuate)
2. Provided measurable comparisons by living situation and ethnicity both before and following outreach program
3. Provided a summary of communication preferences for preparedness information by ethnic group

Challenges/Problems Encountered:

The greatest challenges arose from budget cuts both within the State of California and the City and County of San Francisco (CCSF) which impacted services to IHSS consumers and preparedness activities. Between year I and II of the project, CCSF cancelled their County Disaster Registry for lack of funding. Thus, information we were collecting on location and needs of seniors was no longer incorporated into county databases.

Evaluation Approach:

Performed a pre-post telephone survey of affected individuals. Survey recipients were selected to represent the general In-Home Supportive Services senior demographics. In addition, we conducted focus group interviews of service providers and IHSSPA staff to develop survey questionnaire. Surveys conducted over a two year period to measure impact of outreach on levels of preparedness. Graduate students and faculty collaborated on analysis of findings.

Potential for Replication:

The project is replicable in any community in which university service-learning students can be enlisted in an outreach program in emergency preparedness. As the budget crisis widens and funding to IHSS diminishes, the support for studies and activities on preparedness have become lower priority.

Additional Resources:

ICCE/Disaster Preparedness for Vulnerable Populations

http://www.sfsu.edu/~icce/programs/disaster_prep.html

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