

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PREPAREDNESS

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Abstract – Academic paper.

The highest survival during a disaster is those who understand English and have access to information, transportation, medical services, and communication. Disaster preparedness and emergency response systems are designed for populations that can receive, understand, and respond to mainstream messages. As a result of researching the relationship between the impacts of disasters and the community, it has become evident that vulnerable communities are likely to suffer disproportionate consequences in disasters. People with limited English proficiency are considered a member of the vulnerable community. Members of vulnerable communities are likely to suffer disproportionate consequences; as a preventative measure, the needs of all vulnerable communities must be addressed during pre-event planning. During "clear blue skies" or less active days, Emergency Managers must coordinate with members of these communities to address these needs. The key is working cohesively with community members to bridge the communication gap and easily allow resources to flow between government representatives, first responders, and residents. In times of disaster, residents often help one another and those closest to them. Partnering with community groups who work closely with communities' members can guide best practices. The Leaders can serve as a trusted voice that can assist with delivering preparedness messages and resources within the community. Emphasizing that preparedness begins at the individual level, FEMA explains the benefits of the Whole Community Approach is a shared understanding of risks, needs, capabilities, and increased empowerment of the community's members, therefore improving resiliency nationwide. Partnering with key stakeholders will increase access to and ease disseminating information throughout all phases of the disaster cycle, essential for one's preparedness needs.

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