NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

USING THE FIRE SERVICE TO BUILD COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

by

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March 2018

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington, DC 20503.			
1. AGENCY USE ONLY ***(Leave blank)***	**2. REPORT DATE** March 2018	**3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED** Master's thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE USING THE FIRE SERVICE TO BUILD COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT			**5. FUNDING NUMBERS**
6. AUTHOR(S) Melanie J. Garrels-Bates			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			**8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER**
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A			**10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER**
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. IRB number ____N/A____.			
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.			**12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE**

13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

Modern American society lacks active citizen engagement in disaster preparedness. Membership in social and religious organizations, too, is declining. FEMA has acknowledged that it can no longer sustain response and recovery without a whole-community approach, yet efforts to engage citizens in the process of preparedness are limited; first responders alone are responsible for the success or failure of a disaster response. What can the career fire services do to better engage citizens so that communities can support themselves in times of disaster? Using a case study approach, this thesis analyzes Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) programs from two fire departments to determine which parts of the programs produced more engaged citizens. A critical component of citizen engagement is a dynamic and dedicated fire department liaison who can keep volunteers coming back to the organization.

14. SUBJECT TERMS community engagement, volunteer, fire service, CERT			**15. NUMBER OF PAGES** 109
			16. PRICE CODE
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	**18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE** Unclassified	**19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT** Unclassified	**20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT** UU

NSN 7540-01-280-5500 Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89) Prescribed by ANSI Std. 239-18

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USING THE FIRE SERVICE TO BUILD COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(HOMELAND SECURITY AND DEFENSE)

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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Modern American society lacks active citizen engagement in disaster preparedness. Membership in social and religious organizations, too, is declining. FEMA has acknowledged that it can no longer sustain response and recovery without a whole-community approach, yet efforts to engage citizens in the process of preparedness are limited; first responders alone are responsible for the success or failure of a disaster response. What can the career fire services do to better engage citizens so that communities can support themselves in times of disaster? Using a case study approach, this thesis analyzes Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) programs from two fire departments to determine which parts of the programs produced more engaged citizens. A critical component of citizen engagement is a dynamic and dedicated fire department liaison who can keep volunteers coming back to the organization.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CERT	Community Emergency Response Team
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
LAFD	County of Los Angeles Fire Department
OFD	City of Omaha Fire and Rescue Department
OIG	Office of Inspector General
WWII	World War II

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Even though FEMA uses the term "whole community" in most of its disaster preparedness materials, it has yet to convince current-day citizens to engage in disaster preparedness. For first responders to effectively perform their mission and mitigate disasters in their community, American citizens will have to be part of the solution. That participation must come through volunteerism.

Volunteerism in American social and religious organizations across the country, however, has been declining since the 1960s.[1] Many organizations have closed their doors and no longer have enough volunteers to support emergency preparedness activities. Today, people volunteer with their wallets instead of with their hands. But in times of crisis, all hands are needed to make light work.

The fire service does not traditionally utilize outside assistance. Firefighters are efficient, and they work to accomplish objectives in a short operational period to complete the mission. In times of disasters, however, they may be overwhelmed. Certainly in 2017, with Hurricanes Harvey and Irma and the wildfires in California, it was apparent that first responders can be overwhelmed. What can the career fire service do to engage the community before a disaster strikes?

This thesis was written to show the fire service a solution that is at their fingertips, but that they may not readily see: community engagement. If they allocate the right resources and engage the right people, the fire service can capitalize on potential within its communities. Fire departments must therefore be customer service–driven. They must find the best leader to coordinate volunteers, and they must allow that leader the ability to grow community engagement.

[1] Taya Flores, "Fraternal, Service Groups Battle Declining Membership," *Journal & Courier*, October 10, 2014, http://www.jconline.com/story/news/2014/10/11/fraternal-service-groups-battle-declining-membership/16874977/; Robert D. Putnam, "Tuning in, Tuning out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 28, no. 4 (1995): 664–83, http://doi.org/10.2307/420517.

In this light, the fire service must re-evaluate Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) programs. Currently, the training that CERT programs provide to the volunteer does not align with the functions that fire departments expect from volunteers. This leads to a confusing contract between the citizen and the community and makes it difficult for the fire service to regularly engage volunteers. This thesis examined two career fire departments: the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) and the Omaha Fire Department. LAFD started CERT in America. LAFD CERT establishes high expectations for its volunteers—a potential problem in a society where volunteer commitment has been minimized. The Omaha Fire Department's CERT program, however, has no expectations, and its policies are minimal to non-existent; yet, for a short time, the department greatly benefited from the CERT program.

There are many stakeholders that must ensure the country can support itself in times of disaster. The fire service, local jurisdictions, and FEMA could promote community engagement by providing a smoother integration of CERT programs. FEMA's grant dollars, too, could serve as leverage to incentivize the initiative to move the whole community forward when it comes to disaster preparedness. The fire service could require CERT training as a prerequisite in its hiring process; in doing so, the fire service could also ask retiring firefighters to serve as mentors, and choose the most appropriate staff members to serve as CERT trainers and facilitators. Local jurisdictions should consider training non-emergency staff in a new CERT curriculum, which would allow citizens to be more prepared for and more committed to assisting the community in times of disaster.

Ultimately, as engagement dissipates, America loses. In our fast-paced society, if responders cannot find a way to engage the public, meet community members with open arms, and utilize the opportunities that present themselves, the new and emerging threats will overwhelm our ability to overcome them. Firefighters have a significant platform in many communities that other governmental organizations have lost. They are the key to citizen engagement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my parents, who nurtured me through the good and the bad. Thank you for always believing in me. Mom, thank you for making sure that I got here. That was not an easy task. Dad, thank you for showing me the value of education.

To my former Fire Chiefs Bill Bowes and Bernie Kanger, thank you for giving me the opportunity to learn from you, the respect to be heard by you, the latitude to make decisions, the ability to make mistakes, the competence and character to own consequences, and the ability to grow as a person. Your leadership is a rare gift.

To my boss and mentor Mayor Jean Stothert: Rarely have I had the opportunity to know someone with such strength, grace, integrity, and persistence all rolled into one person. You are a role model for my three girls and all women. I am forever grateful for the opportunity you have given to me to serve my community and my fire department.

To Peg, Tom, Brandon and Bryan you have been a rock. How lucky I am to have found you. Caroline Gillan, Gail Braun, Jeanne McMains, and Dave Mann, thanks for carrying the water; I could not have done it without you. Phyllis Dutton, thank you for being an inspiration. To all the people I used to know, we are going to have to find something else to talk about besides, “how is your thesis coming?” I really, really look forward to the conversation.

To Heidi (my dog), who for 14 years gave me unwavering love and sat at my feet the last two and asked for nothing. Rest in peace, baby. We did it.

To my Beautiful Girls—I love you to the moon and back. When you are 80 years old and I am long gone, you are still my babies.

Alexandria, I went off to school your senior year. Thank you for allowing me to grow as an adult. I hope I am able to make you proud and maybe someday your children will be better off on this earth because of something we did together. You are a beautiful and spirited young lady that deserves all the beauty, love, and peace life has to offer. Find and embrace it!

Liberty, I missed your 10th birthday but I created an iMovie to make you smile. I never thought I could do that! You always show me possibilities. I look forward to creating unlimited projects with you in the future. Your kind heart and unbelievable talents fill my heart with pride and hope! Follow your dreams and stay true to yourself!

Lillianna, you have calmly sat by me for hours upon end and read a book, drew a picture, painted a canvas, or watched a movie waiting for this day. Your unwavering patience is the truest gift. I am excited for what you will teach me next! You will bring love and joy to the world with your keen mind, loving heart, and gentle ways. Pick up your tools and your pixie dust and work your magic!

To any future graduates going through this program who are struggling, who have someone in their lives who doesn't lift them up, who acknowledges their successes as failures, who wants that you wallow in unfertile soil: grow anyway and bloom into the beautiful person you can be so you can share your knowledge with the ones who truly love you. You will make the world a better place for yourself and for homeland security.

I. INTRODUCTION

American communities lack citizen engagement in disaster preparedness. Since the 1970s, American citizens have participated less actively and engaged more passively in most community activities—and disaster preparedness is no exception.[1] A reasonable person who witnessed the events of 9/11 or Hurricane Katrina by way of a TV screen might assume that U.S. citizens have since taken heed and become more prepared, yet the opposite is true. According to a study by Macro International, even though the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) invested millions of dollars into disaster preparedness for American citizens, there was a 4 percent decline in the number of families who had emergency kits after 9/11.[2] In a post-Katrina survey, the Columbia University National Center for Disaster Preparedness also concluded that only 31 percent of respondents had a complete family emergency preparedness plan. This was an increase of only 1 percent from before Katrina.[3] The American public is not preparing.

Equally lacking is the effort of individual states to engage citizens in preparedness. According to reports published by the Department for Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Inspector General, California, Texas, and Florida spent less than 1 percent of their federal preparedness allocations on Citizen Corps programs during fiscal years 2006 through 2008.[4] Created after 9/11, Citizen Corps is the umbrella organization that provides oversight for five partner programs: the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT),

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[1] Robert D. Putnam, "Tuning in, Tuning out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 28, no. 4 (1995): 664–83, doi:10.2307/420517.

[2] Citizen Corps, "Citizen Corps Personal Behavior Change Model for Disaster Preparedness," *Citizen Preparedness Review* no. 4 (Fall 2006): 2, https://s3-us-gov-west-1.amazonaws.com/dam-production/uploads/20130726-1910-25045-8493/citizen_prep_review_issue_4.pdf.

[3] Citizen Corps, 2.

[4] Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG), *The State of Florida's Management of State Homeland Security Program and Urban Areas Security Initiative Grants Awarded during Fiscal Years 2007 through 2009*, OIG-12-13 (Washington, DC: DHS, 2011), www.oig.dhs.gov/assets/Mgmt/OIG_12-13_Nov11.pdf; DHS OIG, *The State of Oklahoma's Management of State Homeland Security Program and Urban Areas Security Initiative Grants Awarded during Fiscal Years 2006 through 2008*, OIG-12-11 (Washington, DC: DHS, 2011), https://www.oig.dhs.gov/assets/Mgmt/OIG_12-11_Nov11.pdf; DHS OIG, *The State of Texas Management of State Homeland Security Program and Urban Areas Security Initiative Grants Awarded during Fiscal Years 2006 through 2008*, OIG-11-44 (Washington, DC: DHS, 2011), https://www.oig.dhs.gov/assets/Mgmt/OIG_11-44_Feb11.pdf.

Volunteers in Police Service, Fire Corps, Neighborhood Watch, and the Medical Reserve Corps. The Citizen Corps' partner agencies are represented by the logos in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Five Citizen Corps Programs[5]

Citizen Corps programs, run on the national level by FEMA, "harnesses the power of every individual through education, training, and volunteer service to make communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to the hazards and threats facing their community."[6] The importance of Citizen Corps program implementation, however, is misrepresented by the low dollar amounts the programs are allocated at the state level.

Since 9/11, America has spent billions of dollars on disaster recovery. Yet finding a way to engage citizens to become more prepared has not been realized. Even when that participation would be for self-benefit, citizens are not preparing for emergencies. In 2017, states recognized that they cannot take on large-scale hurricanes, fires, and floods without

[5] Source: Sharon Fitzgerald, "How to Start Your Local Citizen Corps Council," Slideplayer, accessed March 16, 2018, http://slideplayer.com/slide/7662344.

[6] "Citizen Corps," Department of Homeland Security, accessed May 12, 2017, https://www.ready.gov/about-citizen-corps.

assistance from the community. Federal assistance has been stretched to its capacity. Yet community engagement is not getting the consideration it needs to help capture the meaningful attention of the American public.

Regardless of the community's engagement in preparedness, it is the responsibility of local first responders to be prepared to respond to the community during a crisis. It is the duty of every fire chief, police chief, and emergency manager to ensure his or her community is prepared for a disaster. The community truly depends on its first responders to be ready when a tragedy strikes. Yet no response agency has the resources on hand to resolve a catastrophic natural or manmade disaster without a cultivated community that is also ready to assist in the efforts. From a grassroots level, who can take the lead?

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Citizens are not engaged in disaster preparedness for their own communities, even though systems already exist to train them to prepare for emergencies. Local emergency responders can benefit from trained citizens by harnessing their collective energy through volunteer participation. Yet many agencies are struggling to organize preparedness efforts; the efforts are underutilized and methods to corral involvement overall are not productive.

Currently, emergency management has played a large part in what FEMA terms "whole-community" preparedness—essentially, emergency managers must engage everyone else throughout the community in preparing for disasters. Approximately 4,247 members belong to the International Association of Emergency Managers, and there are 1,666 officially certified emergency managers worldwide.[7] The majority of local emergency management agencies are small group shops that provide oversight for disaster preparedness for thousands of citizens across the United States. These agencies support community emergency planning and help organize others groups that support communities during disasters. These small emergency management agencies also host many Citizen Corps councils and CERTs across the United States.

[7] "IAEM Annual Report 2015–2016," International Association of Emergency Managers, accessed February 28, 2018, http://www.iaem.com/documents/IAEM-Annual-Report-2016.pdf.

Emergency managers are increasingly credentialed and understand the federal integration of FEMA into the local response community. They do not, however, have the infrastructure—facilities or human capital—to train for and integrate FEMA's whole-community approach at the community level. Since 9/11, FEMA has spent billions of dollars on emergency management projects. Funding emergency management to build local community engagement, however well intentioned, has been and will continue to be unproductive.

The federal government recognizes that it is ultimately responsible for preparing the average citizen and its communities to recover from the next disaster. FEMA's mission is "to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from and mitigate all hazards."[8] When Citizen Corps was initially founded in January 2002, it was appropriated federal funding in an attempt to show state and local governments that the federal government was interested in community preparedness. As of 2017, the funding has decreased to an "allowable" project under the State Homeland Security Grant Program.[9] Community preparedness activities are competing for the same dollars that states use to train their first responders, outfit their bomb detection units, and pay fusion center staff. It is no mystery why engaging the public is not a priority. This loss of appropriated funding shows a declining level of commitment from FEMA itself.

As the leading federal authority, however, FEMA continues to promote community engagement through online means with Ready.gov. On this site, FEMA suggests that each citizen should prepare to be self-sufficient for the first 72 hours after a disaster strikes.[10] This three-day window minimizes the impact on essential emergency services and gives FEMA time to connect assistance to local responders. Yet, according to a survey done by FEMA's own community engagement program (Citizen Corps), 62 percent of citizens who responded to the survey were relying on emergency first responders in the first 72 hours

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[8] Robert Rose, "FEMA's Mission Statement," October 3, 2012, https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/videos/80684.

[9] Citizen Corps, "Personal Behavior Change Model."

[10] "Build a Kit," DHS, accessed February 28, 2018, https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit.

after a disaster, an amount of dependency that is impossible for first responders to support.[11] In addition, FEMA's Citizen Corps program was found to have 30 percent less active membership than it claimed in a random audit done by the Government Accountability Office; this demonstrates FEMA's inability to maintain active participation from local government or government–community partnerships within FEMA's own purview.[12] As of June 2016, FEMA itself had a cadre of 3,852 full-time employees at ten regional (community) offices and one central office.[13] Splitting FEMA into regional offices decreases overhead by reducing office space; however, it leaves thousands of cities and towns across the United States without a federal presence. Therefore, community development and support of active citizen engagement at the local level is not achievable solely through FEMA employees.

Local emergency management organizations and FEMA have been unable to move active citizen engagement forward since 9/11. They lack a physical presence in local communities. They lack the human capital to make an impact. They lack credibility with the American public. Yet local first responders and FEMA are still on the hook for the disaster response in the eyes of the American public. For responders to be successful, they must have the physical resources and human capital needed to engage the community in preparedness.

B. RESEARCH QUESTION

Positioned across the country in great numbers, the United States has approximately 345,600 firefighters—81 times the number of certified emergency managers and 90 times the number of full-time FEMA employees.[14] They represent 2,651 career fire departments

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[11] Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Emergency Preparedness: FEMA Faces Challenges Integrating Community Preparedness Programs into its Strategic Approach*, GAO-10-193 (Washington, DC: GAO, 2010), 1, https://www.gao.gov/assets/310/301266.pdf.

[12] GAO, 9.

[13] DHS OIG, *FEMA Can Enhance Readiness with Management of its Disaster Incident Workforce*, OIG-16-127-D (Washington, DC: DHS, 2016), 7, https://www.oig.dhs.gov/assets/GrantReports/2016/OIG-16-127-D-Sep16.pdf.

[14] Hylton J.G. Haynes and Gary P. Stein, *U.S. Fire Department Profile—2015* (Quincy, MA: National Fire Protection Association, 2017), https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/News-and-Research/Fire-statistics/Fire-service/osfdprofile.pdf.

that are largely responsible for communities of 25,000 people or more, and they protect 49 percent of the U.S. population.[15] The career fire service operate 24 hours a day, 365 days per year, and have the basic equipment in place to sustain emergency operations. Unlike most emergency operations centers that have to stand up during a disaster, these fire stations and the personnel in them are working to handle emergencies without end. The stations themselves house basic training equipment and contain small-cache supplies for larger events. Firefighters within the stations are educated in the National Incident Management System language, which integrates them into a national response model. They use this system at nearly every incident, from small medical emergencies to large, multi-company structure fires; firefighters are therefore already deployable as part of their daily work. Additionally, because they work within their communities every day, firefighters already hold the respect of their local communities.

National calls for the fire service grew from 10,819,000 total calls in 1980 to nearly triple that number in 2015.[16] However, despite the increased number of calls, there was a 56.4-percent reduction in home fire deaths between 1977 and 2016.[17] This reduction can be attributed to education and prevention efforts. Although the fire service's workload continues to grow, it has a unique opportunity to reach the community that local emergency management agencies and FEMA do not have. The fire service has daily, unparalleled interactions with the community; it serves the most vulnerable populations—those, such as the elderly, that are at higher risk during an emergency. Citizens trust the fire service to come into their homes, which gives the fire service the human capital and credibility to communicate and engage with the public. The fire service, the local fire department, and local fire fighters have experience, and have promoted a fire safety message that resonates and engages the community—one that has successfully reduced fires over time. When the

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[15] Haynes and Stein.

[16] "Fire Department Calls," National Fire Protection Association, updated June 2017, https://www.nfpa.org/News-and-Research/Fire-statistics-and-reports/Fire-statistics/The-fire-service/Fire-department-calls/Fire-department-calls.

[17] Hylton J.G. Haynes, *Fire Loss in the United States during 2016* (Quincy, MA: National Fire Protection Association, 2017), http://www.nfpa.org/news-and-research/fire-statistics-and-reports/fire-statistics/fires-in-the-us/overall-fire-problem/fire-loss-in-the-united-states.

fire department comes to talk at schools, kids get excited. When a firefighter takes the time to talk to a group about safety, citizens pay attention. When the fire service promotes a message, the community listens.

With the professional fire service already positioned as a leader in the response model and a key stakeholder in successful outcomes to local disasters, this thesis examines the following question: What can the career fire services do to better engage citizens so that communities can support themselves in times of disaster?

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

FEMA's national preparedness model—the whole-community approach—is being used as a guiding principle for federal disaster preparedness. According to FEMA, the whole-community approach means:

1. Involving people in the development of national preparedness documents.
2. Ensuring their roles and responsibilities are reflected in the content of the materials.[18]

This model supports the systems that local responders already have in place. However, the American public largely receives no communication about this approach. Although FEMA assumes it has a working structure in place to actively involve citizens in community, government, neighborhood, and groups activities, this system may no longer be functioning as well as it once was. Because engagement has changed, citizens are no longer taking an active role in or responsibility for community preparedness. This makes the whole-community approach nearly impossible to actionize.

The first well-known author to discuss the uniqueness of social engagement in early American history was Alexis De Tocqueville, a French citizen who came to America when he was 25. His writings would become the basis for the book *Democracy in America* and translated by Mansfield and Winthrop, it would become the foundation for understanding early American social engagement. Tocqueville noted back in the 1830s that, in America,

[18] "Whole Community," FEMA, last updated August 21, 2017, https://www.fema.gov/whole-community.

"each man in his sphere takes an active part in the government of society."[19] Most scholars acknowledge a change in American social engagement since then, and the corresponding effects on social connections.

This literature review begins with a look at social change in American history. It considers changes in citizens' trust of the government, along with changes in who the public actually *does* trust, noting that the fire service has garnered a higher level of trust than other governmental agencies. Finally, it discusses the importance of engagement as viewed by scholars in education and civics.

1. Social Change during the 20th Century

In the early days of America, observers like Tocqueville wrote of significant, unprecedented social capital found in America. But in more current times, America's social capital is declining. Robert Putnam's book *Bowling Alone* may be one of the most detailed and comprehensive collections to date on that change in America's social capital.[20] Putnam presents data about declining attendance in numerous social, political, and religious groups, particularly over the last half of the 20th century, offering statistical insight into the country's declining social engagement.

In today's society, according to Putnam, many commitments compete for our time. Suburbanization and a commuting workforce have increased the time workers spend traveling to and from the office daily.[21] Specifically, travel time for workers in many large cities exceeds one hour per day.[22] This travel time takes away from time for friends and family; time for community and other activities suffers even more. The old phrase "there are not enough hours in the day" seems to echo many of Putnam's findings.

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[19] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Wintrhop (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 237.

[20] Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

[21] Putnam, 208.

[22] Tom Huddleston, Jr., "These U.S. Cities Have the Worst Commute Times," Fortune, March 3, 2016, http://fortune.com/2016/03/03/us-cities-average-commute-time/.

One of the primary reasons for this decline in social capital may be that Americans fill their free time with television. Television viewing, an invasion on the time of American society, has affected every generation, from the young to the old. When it comes to the younger generation, 6 percent of sixth graders had a television in their rooms in 1970, but by 1999 that number had increased to 77 percent.[23] Their time filled with television programs, this generation has not considered using its free time to engage in community responsibilities. Similarly, young couples spend triple the time amount of time watching TV as they do talking to one another—and the amount of time spent watching TV only increases as people retire.[24] While those who retired prior to 2000 used to participate in community groups, Putnam suggests retirees now engage more in watching television and less in collective activities. People used to listen to music together or participate in activities as a group. With the invention of the television, however, their activities became more individualized. By the late 1990s, over three-fourths of American households had more than one TV set.[25] In recent years, Americans can subscribe to hundreds of television and movie channels—the average American in 2014 subscribed to 189.[26]

Putnam and Norris both acknowledge that television programming causes a disconnection from community engagement.[27] However, Norris argues watching current news broadcasting has the opposite effect; it is possible that people who watch the news become more engaged.[28] Her studies indicate that people who follow the news on television vote more often in elections, contribute to politics, and participate in the community more often than people who do not watch TV programs related to current

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[23] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 223–224.

[24] Putnam, 208.

[25] Putnam, 208.

[26] Megan Geuss, "On Average, Americans Get 189 Cable TV Channels and Only Watch 17," *Ars Technica*, May 6, 2014, https://arstechnica.com/information-technology/2014/05/on-average-americans-get-189-cable-tv-channels-and-only-watch-17/.

[27] Pippa Norris, "Does Television Erode Social Capital? A Reply to Putnam," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 29, no. 3 (1996): 474, http://doi.org/10.2307/420827; Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.

[28] Norris, "Does Television Erode Social Capital," 479.

affairs.[29] Despite Norris's findings, it seems improbable that a true method of increasing social engagement could be found through television news media. While some means of engaging small groups may work, the general constraints that TV puts on time diminishes opportunities to engage. In addition, because trust in the government and trust in the media is so low, it would be difficult for these platforms to have the credibility necessary to leverage community engagement.

Indeed, times have changed; neither Norris nor Putnam could have anticipated the technological advancement that would occur 15 years after their respective works were published. Cell phones equipped with internet access came into the hands of nearly every American in the 21st century. Most scholars argue that the internet and cell phones are now more problematic than television had ever been for community engagement. According to Lee Raine from the Pew Research Center, cell phones, often with Wi-Fi access to the internet, are in the hands of 91 percent of Americans as of 2013.[30] There is debate among scholars as to these devices' usefulness in engagement. Some argue that internet-connected cell phones are simply another form of communication and may bring citizens together more often. While this may be an advantage for those who must communicate from a distance, adults are spending around three to five hours a day on their connected devices.[31] With this much time committed to a device, it is difficult to create the time needed for improved face-to-face communication.

2. Government Sentiment

Just as Americans are less active in community engagement today, they, too, are less active in political engagement. Ruy Teixeira has evaluated declining engagement within the political sphere. He identified two particular trends that affect voter turnout in America: "a decline in social connectedness from a younger, less married and less church-

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[29] Norris, 477.

[30] Lee Raine, "Cell Phone Ownership Hits 91% of Adults," Pew Research Center, June 6, 2013, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/06/06/cell-phone-ownership-hits-91-of-adults/.

[31] David Smooke, "How Much Time Do People Spend on Their Mobile Phones in 2017?" Hacker Noon, last modified September 4, 2017, https://hackernoon.com/how-much-time-do-people-spend-on-their-mobile-phones-in-2017-e5f90a0b10a6.

going electorate and a generalized withdrawal or disconnected electorate due to a declining belief in government responsiveness."[32] Teixeira advocates for government reform and citizen duty, indicating that reform is needed "both top down and bottom up."[33] Reform is needed to make sure media, political constituents, and other interested parties behave in a way that regains the trust and favor of the American people.

Diamond agrees with Teixeira that the government needs reform. In his book *In Search of Democracy*, Diamond argues the best way to ensure a healthy democracy is to have an inclusive, respectful, transparent, and accountable government.[34] The American public does not currently view the government this way. Diamond suggests that democracy fails when people are distrustful of politicians and the government. In addition, political violence, human rights violations by police, weak rule of law, and widespread political corruption may cause democracies to fail.[35] There are a variety of contributing factors to the erosion of public trust. According to data obtained by Alec Tyson, a senior researcher at Pew Research Center, American constituents have done a complete flip: in the '60s, about 80 percent of the public trusted the government while 20 percent did not; between 2012 and 2015, only about 20 percent of the public trusted the government, while 80 percent did not (see Figure 2).[36] This change in American citizens' view of their government has occurred over roughly 50 years.

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[32] Ruy A. Teixeira, *The Disappearing American Voter* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1992), 46.

[33] Teixeira, 164.

[34] Larry Jay Diamond, *In Search of Democracy* (Abingdon-on-Thames, UK: Routledge, 2016).

[35] Diamond, 82.

[36] "Beyond Distrust: How Americans View Their Government," Pew Research Center, November 23, 2015, http://www.people-press.org/2015/11/23/1-trust-in-government-1958-2015/.

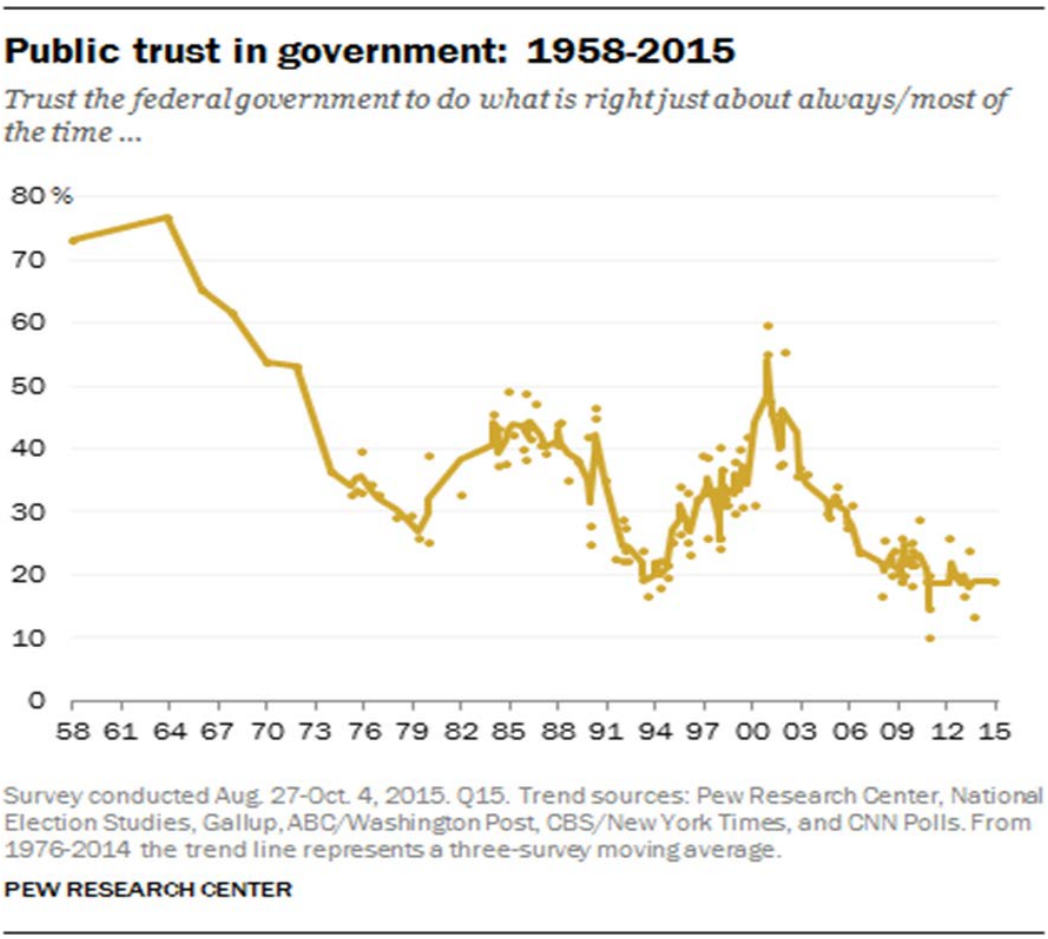

Figure 2. Decline in Public Trust of Government over Time[37]

In 2010, a survey by Mizrahi, Vigoda-Gadot, and Van Ryzin likewise identified that the American public's trust in the government was low. The U.S. Congress and President of the United States, of 16 government occupations, were the two that survey respondents trusted least, demonstrating that people do not trust their most high-ranking officials.[38] Also included at the bottom of the distrusted list were the IRS, the Federal Reserve, and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This public distrust may also hinder citizen engagement. Gallup looked at trust and distrust from 1993 to 2009 and noted

[37] Pew Research Center.

[38] Shlomo Mizrahi, Eran Vigoda-Gadot, and Gregg Van Ryzin, "Public Sector Management, Trust, Performance and Participation," *Public Performance and Management Review* 34, no. 2 (December 2010): 268–312, http://doi.org/10.2307/41104061.

a short period after 9/11 when there was a small increase in trust, though it quickly backtracked.[39] Figure 3 demonstrates how very little the American public trusts the federal government to do what is right between 1993 and 2009.

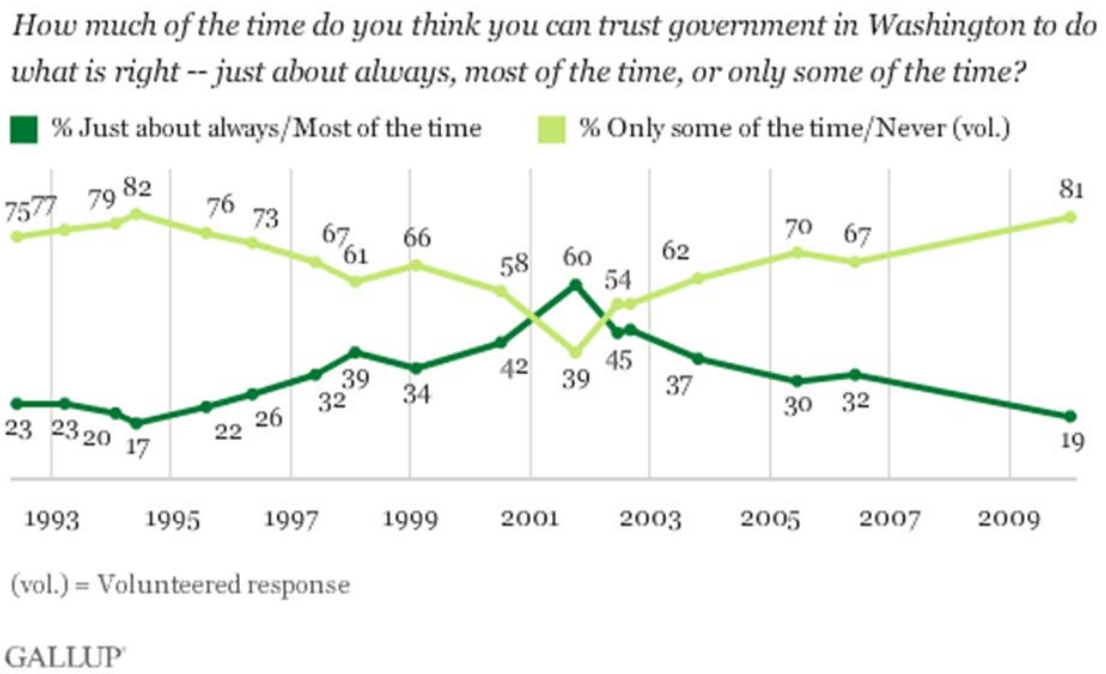

Figure 3. Trust in Government since 1993[40]

3. Fire Service

While faith in the federal government is dismal, the community holds individual branches of local government in high regard. The fire service enjoys a remarkably high level of public trust and is viewed more favorably than other areas of the public sector, according to Mizrahi, Vigoda-Gadot, and Van Ryzin. They examined public trust across the United States and considered the following:

[39] Elaine Kamarck, "Lessons for the Future of Government Reform," Brookings, June 18, 2013, https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/lessons-for-the-future-of-government-reform/.

[40] Kamarck.

1. Citizens' satisfaction with public services
2. Trust in administrative and government institutions
3. Trust in civil servants
4. Faith in citizenship involvement
5. Public sector image
6. Quality of public personnel
7. Quality of leadership and management
8. Transparency and accountability
9. Responsiveness
10. Ethics, morality, and integrity
11. Entrepreneurship and innovation.[41]

They determined that, in the eyes of adults, firefighters and the fire service outperform every other discipline in the federal government and in professions traditionally considered trustworthy—like teachers or doctors—when it comes to community satisfaction (see Figure 4).[42] In addition, the fire service has a vested interest in seeing that community engagement is successful. The community, after all, is what the fire service must support during times of disaster. Figure 5 demonstrates the substantial favorable public view of firefighters and the fire service above other public service disciplines as assessed by Mizrahi, Vigoda-Gadot, and Van Ryzin.

[41] Mizrahi, Vigoda-Gadot, and Van Ryzin, "Public Sector Management."

[42] Mizrahi, Vigoda-Gadot, and Van Ryzin.

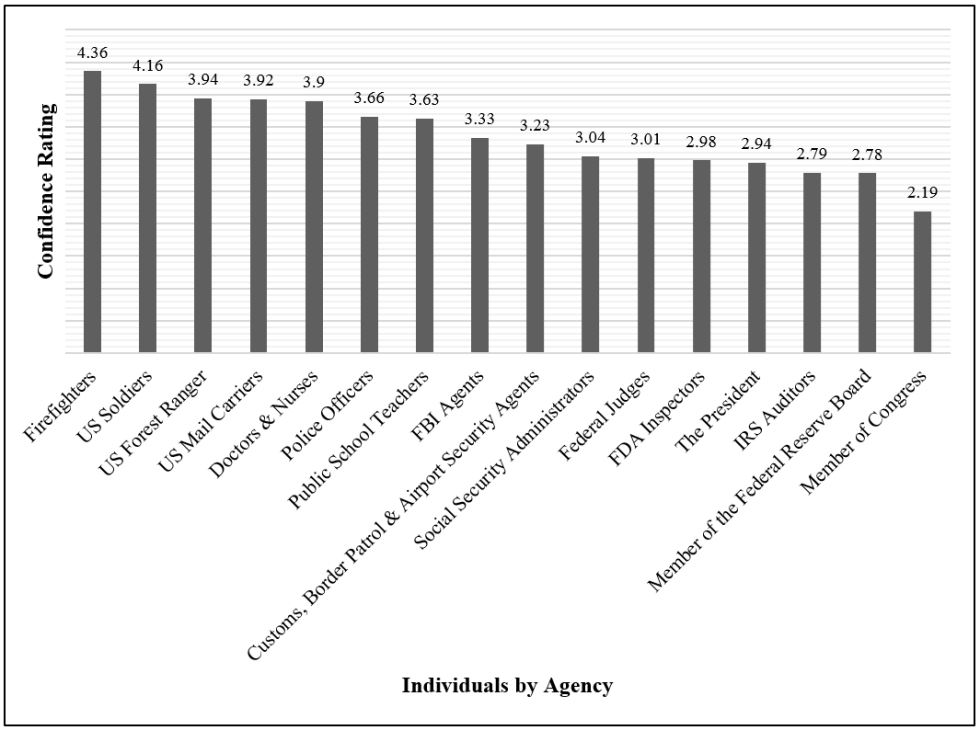

Figure 4. Trust in Public Officials and Employees[43]

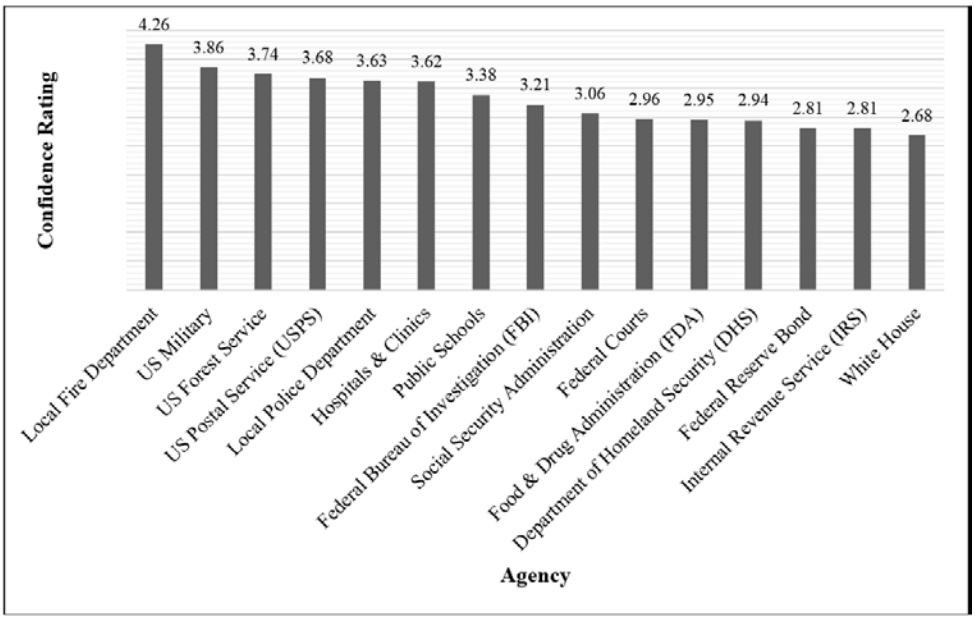

Figure 5. Trust in Major Organizations and Agencies[44]

[43] Source: Mizrahi, Vigoda-Gadot, and Van Ryzin.

[44] Source: Mizrahi, Vigoda-Gadot, and Van Ryzin.

4. The Importance of Engagement

According to many scholars, civic education is a critical component in community engagement.[45] The decline of civic knowledge and strong community engagement are concerning to business, education, and government leaders. In the private sector, executives at Google have become concerned with engagement. Krontiris et al. have performed multiple studies analyzing how citizen engagement has changed over time. They concluded that nearly 50 percent of people are interested in what is going on in government and political life. They discuss the concept of the "interested bystander," an individual who is "aware of political or community issues around her, but not active in addressing them. She knows what civic challenges exist and would like to complain/act/improve the situation but she has not yet found the motivation or drive to do something about those challenges."[46] In addition, there is a misalignment between what people say they value and what they actually do to actionize those values. For example, the Google study found that people often say their vote counts more at the local level, yet they only vote in national elections—a clear disconnect between what people think and how they behave.[47] Both Google's recent study and Putnam's 20th-century study share striking similarities when it comes to people's thoughts, beliefs, and subsequent actions: they do not necessarily coincide. Putnam found that people "misremembered" their attendance and participation in church services and functions.[48] People are becoming more self-centered or self-interested than community-centered or community-interested. Krontiris et al. found that people are more likely to act civically when doing so aligns with their self-interests. Putnam found that people were generally less engaged in the community.

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[45] John J. Patrick, "Ten Trends in Education for Democracy in America," presented at the International Symposium on the Importance of Civic Education for Positive Socialization in Society, December 9, 2002, Vilnius, Lithuania, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED472003.pdf.

[46] Katie Krontiris et al., "Understanding America's 'Interested Bystander;' A Complicated Relationship with Civic Duty" (findings paper, Google, 2015), https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B4Nqm_QFLwnLNTZYLXp6azhqNTg/view.

[47] Krontiris et al.

[48] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.

Fortunately, educators are also concerned about engagement. According to education scholars, civic education is a critical component driving community engagement. John J. Patrick writes, "A central facet of civic education for a constitutional democracy is development of intellectual skills and participatory skills (community engagement), which enable citizens to think and act on behalf of their individual right and their common good."[49] Realizing this lack of civic knowledge and its connection to engagement has fueled a movement to bring civic education back into classrooms. Curricula in states across the country have begun to show increased civic learning opportunities and measurement of civic knowledge in K-12 education. During the late 20th century and early 21st century, legislation was passed across states mandating civic education in most classrooms and nationwide testing at grades 4, 8, and 12. However, even though the emphasis has been placed on the curriculum, the outcomes are not necessarily being cultivated. The results of the 2006, 2010, and 2014 Nation's Report Card for civics saw very little if any improvement.[50]

Individuals within the government sphere and academia are also concerned with engagement. Former Supreme Court Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor saw the importance of civic knowledge and spent much of her career promoting its growth. She said, civic knowledge "is not handed down through the gene pool. Every generation has to learn it, and we have some work to do"[51] Through her foundation, she demonstrated her commitment to civics. By creating video games called iCivics for children to learn about their government, she was able to share her love of American government with the next generation.[52] In Naval Postgraduate School theses, Gustafson, Vasquez, and Ravert have

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[49] John J. Patrick, "Civic Education for Constitutional Democracy: An International Perspective" (ERIC digest, ERIC, 1995), https://www.ericdigests.org/1996-3/civic.htm.

[50] Institute of Educational Sciences, *Civics 2010: National Assessment of Educational Progress at Grades 4, 8, and 12*, NCES 2011-466 (Washington, DC: Department of Education, 2011), https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/main2010/2011466.pdf.

[51] Michael Gerson et al., *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools*, ed. Jonathan Gould (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania), 14, http://civicmission.s3.amazonaws.com/118/f0/5/171/1/ Guardian-of-Democracy-report.pdf.

[52] "iCivics," accessed March 1, 2018, https://www.icivics.org/.

also provided significant contributions toward the improvement of civic learning.[53] They all saw the critical importance for an educational system that supported civic knowledge for America's youth. Strikingly, Ravert mentions, "Civic education must encompass the whole of education, leaving its mark on all subjects."[54]

Youniss and Levine, echoing Ravert, claim that it is critical for society to give young people opportunities to engage or practice what they have learned to increase civic engagement. In the book *Engaging Young People in Civic Life*, Youniss and Levine state, "Public Engagement is a public good in the strict sense that it benefits members of a community even if they do not themselves engage. By volunteering and running and joining associations, we make our communities safer, healthier and more attractive for all."[55]

D. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The objective of this thesis is to improve citizen engagement and increase emergency preparedness for local community responders. The thesis follows a case study approach, evaluating two CERT programs, each successful in its own respect. It applies lessons from these CERT programs and from the fire service to improve community engagement with a model that can be replicated.

America's disaster response system is at a point of crisis. First responders cannot realistically meet the enormous demands of disasters with their limited resources if the public remains idle. The fire service is in a pivotal position for improving citizen engagement and disaster preparedness across the country. It must always answer the call for assistance. If the fire service is to maintain the public trust, it must be able to supply the

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[53] Brian P. Ravert, "Protecting America through Better Civic Education" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2013), https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/37698; Teresa S. Gustafson, "Empowering Children to Lead Change: Incorporating Preparedness Curricula in the E K-12 Educational System" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2009), https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/4859; Albert Vasquez, "Theory to Practice: How Developing a K-12 Curriculum in Emergency Preparedness, Life Safety, or Homeland Security Can Lead to Resiliency" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2012), https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/17471.

[54] Ravert, "Protecting America," 65.

[55] James Youniss and Peter Levine, *Engaging Young People in Civic Life* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2009), 274.

resources necessary to ensure the safety of the citizens it is sworn to protect. In times of disaster, emergency services will need the community to assist.

E. CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter II considers what happened to America's community engagement and how this is reflected in social and religious organization membership and volunteerism. Chapter III explains FEMA's National Response Framework and National Preparedness Goal and how whole community preparedness is not being realized by financial investment from the federal or local agencies. Lack of investment explains why community engagement is not working. Chapter IV presents a case study of how two fire departments have provided CERT programs as a basic structure for engaging citizens. It examines how their successes benefit the department and the community. Chapter V examines the outcomes of these programs, showing that improved engagement could stem from curriculum reform, improved customer service, data collection, and policy and procedures for CERT, as well as integration of a strong community liaison for volunteers. The thesis concludes by examining areas where FEMA may flex its muscles to promote CERT growth in communities.

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II. DECLINING ENGAGEMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON FEMA'S MODEL

As of 2018, citizen–community engagement across the United States is disappearing. FEMA and the federal government struggle with the credibility needed to engage volunteers. To add to the problem, the frameworks of traditional American volunteerism and participation in community organizations are weak and unraveling. Volunteers do not show up to weekly meetings. Clubs do not retain membership. Churches and neighborhood groups continue to see less face-to-face participation.[56] Many social organizations, once the pillars of their community, have closed their doors. Volunteerism has changed. Today's volunteers give a few hours of their time; they are not committed to the long-term success of community organizations. These issues all deeply affect FEMA's whole-community plan for disaster preparedness.

This chapter describes the decline in American social engagement, to include involvement in religious organizations. Volunteer expectations—and expectations of volunteer management—are discussed to illuminate why FEMA's whole-community approach is currently unattainable.

A. SOCIAL ORGANIZATION DECLINE

Patriotism has traditionally played a significant role in American volunteerism. During the Civil War, World War I, and World War II (WWII), U.S. citizens had common enemies, and feelings of mutual sacrifice brought solidarity.[57] Patriotism fueled civic involvement in the community. The spirit that built fraternal and social clubs expanded across the United States during WWII, and volunteerism in civic organizations grew as a result.[58] The number of volunteers who joined civic organizations swelled; in 1942, the Civilian Defense Corps grew from 1.2 to 12 million members in one year, and Red Cross

[56] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.

[57] Putnam, 208.

[58] Putnam.

grew from 1.1 million members in 1940 to 7.5 million in 1945.[59] After WWII, soldiers came back to their communities, and people continued to participate in community-based social organizations. In general, WWII veterans were socially integrated into their communities.[60] As Robert Putnam explains, nearly all social organizations increased their "market share" between the time WWII ended and the mid-1960s.[61] The WWII-era generation is often described as the "greatest generation," and the veterans from that era volunteered heavily in their communities. In an interview with Taya Flores for *Journal & Courier*, Duane Vaught, deputy grandmaster of the Grand Encampment of the Knights Templar, elaborated on this idea: "Unbelievable numbers of [veterans] joined everything. Our membership skyrocketed starting in the mid-'40s until the mid-'60s. Our membership was huge in the '50s. Everybody wanted to be a member …. [WWII veterans] were ready to own this society, to be a part of everything."[62] It was a great time for social organizations and a great time for communities because of those organizations.

As WWII veterans began to age and pass away, however, so did participation in organizations. All social clubs lost membership. Vaught remarked, "Baby boomers who came of age around 1970 were not joiners."[63] As older members passed away, younger potential members had different priorities and pressures. This was apparent as Putnam and his fellow researchers looked at the numbers from organizational membership across the country. In the same interview with Flores, George Braatz, the executive secretary of the Masonic Service Association of North America, concedes that WWII-era membership was the key to successful social organizations. He noted, "We are taking in a pretty decent number of members each year, but the deaths among the WWII generation offset the people joining every single year …. That's the unfortunate part."[64] Regardless of the organization, membership decline was common after the 1960s. National Elks Lodge membership has

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[59] Putnam, 208.

[60] Putnam, 208.

[61] Putnam, 208.

[62] Flores, "Service Groups Battle Declining Membership."

[63] Flores.

[64] Flores.

also declined, shrinking from 1.64 million members nationwide in 1980 to 802,592 in 2010—a decline of over 50 percent in 30 years.[65]

The local impact of declining social organization membership is significant. In California, the Vallejo Elks Lodge closed its doors in December 2014. Ninety-year-old Charlie Travers, the former Elks Lodge Exalted Ruler, told the *Times-Herald*, "Society is changing. Technology has taken over and social clubs have suffered all over the country."[66] The Vallejo Elks once boasted 3,200 members, but by 2014, the lodge had less than 250 members and could no longer afford to keep the building open.[67] In its prime, the Vallejo Elks Lodge hosted a sports complex where members' great grandkids learned to swim. Local couples were married on the property under the gazebo in the lodge's backyard area. In addition, special breakfasts were served on Mother's Day that brought in crowds of 800.[68] Now, the building stands empty. In Indiana, the West Lafayette Elks lodge has experienced a similar decline in membership; boasting over 2,000 members in 1970, membership in 2010 had decreased to 322.[69]

Many of the people who do join social organizations do not actively contribute to them, even if they still send in membership dues. In the interview with Taya Flores, Jack Streicher, exalted ruler of the Lafayette local 143 Elks, remarked, "A lot of people join but don't really volunteer time or really participate in what's going on. They are members in name only, passive."[70] These organizations' properties are now vacant, often leading to problems with crime and upkeep for neighborhoods. As organizations dissolve, there are fewer opportunities for successive generations to learn the value of working with others to forward a cause for the greater good.

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[65] Flores.

[66] Rachel Raskins-Zrihen, "Vallejo Elks' Redwood Parkway Clubhouse Closed for Good," *Vallejo Times Herald*, December 29, 2014, http://www.timesheraldonline.com/article/NH/20141229/NEWS/141229732.

[67] Raskins-Zrihen.

[68] Raskins-Zrihen.

[69] Flores, "Service Groups Battle Declining Membership."

[70] Flores.

Just like the Elks, Rotary International has experienced a continued decline in membership, though the organization hopes to make improvements to bolster membership. From 2003 to 2013, Rotary membership in the United States shrunk by 58,481, a 15-percent decline; membership fell another 5 percent between 2011 and 2015.[71] Like many social clubs and charities prior to 1980, Rotary was criticized for being largely white male–centric and closed to women.[72] Clubs today have changed not only to comply with the law, but to gain members that reflect the community. Working on a strategy to improve membership, Rotary evaluated the time of day it holds meetings, its membership dues, and the meals served at meetings, with an eye for accommodating 21st-century members. The result of its evaluation demonstrated that potential members no longer have the flexibility for lunch meetings—a side effect of the now-fading male-dominated society.[73] Employees have more work pressures and less control over their schedules. In an interview with Ruth Serven of the *Kansas City Star*, outgoing Kansas City Rotary Club President Chuck Eddy said, "The increasing racial and gender diversity of the business world has helped increase diverse membership in the club, which participates in various charitable activities including a summer camp for kids with disabilities, and giving bagels to the hungry. We have to replace ourselves …. And we don't want to replace ourselves with old, white men."[74]

In Kansas City, Rotary has increased its reach for new members and changed its demographic, starting with the Waldo-Brookside Rotary Club. The Waldo-Brookside club was established in 2015 with 50 members, and eventually grew to 70 members; the dues are less expensive and members are more diverse in age and race.[75] In a *Kansas City Star*

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[71] "How Rotary Can Keep and Recruit Members," Rotary International, accessed March 1, 2018, https://www.rotaryeclubone.org/makeups/articles/howrotarycankeepan; "Rotary Membership Regional Membership Supplement: USA, Canada, Caribbean Islands," Rotary International, 2013, https://r.search.yahoo.com/_ylt=AwrTcdwZ8LJZps0AQ18nnIlQ;_ylu=X3oDMTByYnR1Zmd1BGNvbG8DZ3ExBHBvcwMyBHZ0aWQDBHNlYwNzcg--/RV=2/RE=1504927898/RO=10/RU=https%3a%2f%2fmy.rotary.org%2fen%2fdocument%2fregional-membership-supplement-usa-canada-caribbean-islands/RK=1/RS=kTZvWCHBuwo6cD8cgcSG6wxK_tw-.

[72] Stuart Taylor, Jr., "High Courts Rule Rotary Must Admit Women," *New York Times*, May 5, 1987, http://www.nytimes.com/1987/05/05/us/high-court-rules-that-rotary-clubs-must-admit-women.html.

[73] Rotary International, "Regional Membership Supplement."

[74] Ruth Serven, "Service Clubs Push against Fading Influence to Find New Members," *Kansas City Star*, July 10, 2016, http://www.kansascity.com/news/business/article88821292.html.

[75] Serven.

interview, Brian King, director of membership development for the club, insists that "Rotary wants to be attractive to young professionals."[76] But on a national level, only 20 percent of Rotary Club members are female, and 90 percent of the membership is over 40 years—a significant imbalance when compared to the demographics of the general population.[77] Statistically, Rotary is still struggling to attract young, diverse members. Despite its optimism and continued work, the membership decline continues.

Since women entered the workforce, the amount of civic engagement in the United States has decreased overall. Women have always had a supportive role in the structure of social organizations: they ensured their families attended church, and were responsible for their husbands' dinner parties. After 1950, however, women entered the workforce, and one in three had jobs.[78] When women went to work due to financial strain in particular, it negatively affected their involvement in community life.[79] As women experienced more stress and had less free time, they became less committed to volunteering and social engagement.[80] Neighborhood parties that connected neighbors began to decline. This impact on volunteering may have carried over to future generations as well, since children saw less volunteering and community engagement from their parents. Between the 1950s and the 1990s, the number of women who worked outside the home increased from one-third to one-half.[81] Overall community connections have not recovered.

The decline in a generation of volunteer-oriented citizens, a change in the overall way people volunteer, and the evolution of women in society all played a role in the deterioration of social organizations since their post-WWII prominence. At the national level, these social organizations are losing membership; at the local level, they are also losing their real estate. The failing structure of social organizations is problematic for

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[76] Serven.

[77] Serven.

[78] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 208.

[79] Putnam, 200.

[80] Putnam, 195.

[81] Putnam, 194.

citizen engagement, but the social structure is not the only community bond that is failing in America.

B. RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION DECLINE

Churches have always been a source of organizing, focusing volunteers and garnering active community engagement for America in times of need. But today, much like the social organization, religious organizations are steadily losing both membership and attendance. While Americans in 2000 reported religious attendance at a rate roughly 10 percent less than in the 1960s, their actual participation rates have dropped by nearly 50 percent, according to Putnam.[82] Although church members claim they are attending—whether because they want to believe they are or because they feel obligated to report so—members are showing up less often. According to researchers at Gallup, the decline in religious establishment membership in America is more significant than Putnam's report—the decline spans across all denominations starting as early as 1938 and continuing through 2016.[83] Gallup report a 15 percent drop in Americans who claim membership in a church, synagogue, or mosque over the last 20 years. Figure 6 depicts the significant downward trend of religious organization membership in America.

[82] Putnam, 70–1.

[83] "Five Key Findings on Religion in the U.S.," Gallup, December 23, 2016, http://news.gallup.com/poll/200186/five-key-findings-religion.aspx.

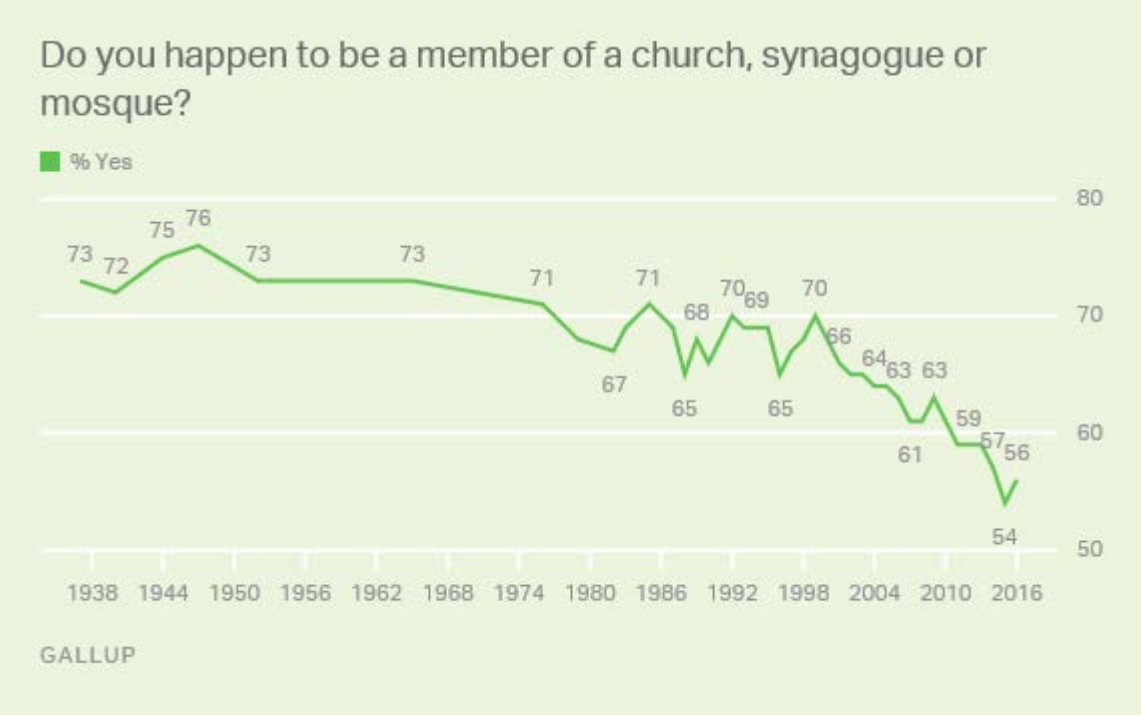

Figure 6. Declining Church Membership in America 1938–2016[84]

In Hartford, Connecticut, the Catholic Church is experiencing declining attendance at an even higher rate. In an article for the *Hartford Patch*, a spokesperson for the Archdiocese told Brian McCready, "A total of 26 churches will close at the end of June, 2017; 68 will remain as is, while 144 churches will merge."[85] The Catholic Church in Hartford and other religious organizations like it are feeling pressure—understandably so—to make fiscal decisions that will allow their organizations to remain viable. In addition, Brian McCready reports, "In the last 50 years, Sunday Mass attendance in the Archdiocese has declined from 395,000 to 123,500, a decline of nearly 70 percent; this is matched by a decline in baptisms and church weddings."[86] New membership growth is not coming from successive generations, leaving an unfilled void. Keep in mind that these

[84] Source: Gallup.

[85] Brian McCready, "26 Churches to Close, 144 Merge, Hartford Archdiocese Announces," Patch, May 7, 2017, https://patch.com/connecticut/hartford/26-churches-close-118-merge-hartford-archdiocese-announces-see-full-list-here.

[86] McCready.

numbers do not reflect the increasing number of people who join the organizations and pay dues, but do not participate; churches, therefore, may be seeing a more significant loss of actual participants, more in line with the drastic decreases seen in social organizations. With this decline in participation, many religious organizations have consolidated or closed.

C. DECLINING ENGAGEMENT IS PROBLEMATIC FOR RESPONSE

The organizational departure of churches and social clubs has eliminated the structure that FEMA and local emergency responders have depended on in disasters. These organizations may have filled critical roles, such as accepting donations from the public or setting up and running emergency shelters; they may have taken phone calls for damage assessments or helped rescue victims of natural disasters. The roles left vacant have been mission-oriented and are critical for sustaining emergency-response functions in times of disaster. For many reasons, however, organizations and the volunteers who fill them have diminished or disappeared.

1. New Volunteers and Critical Volunteer Management

Volunteers will always be needed during disasters. Today's emergency planners, longing for the WWII generation of volunteers, must work with a new type of volunteer: "episodic" volunteers who give their time for less than 99 hours per year.[87] This type of volunteer, whether teenager or middle-aged adult, is not committed to an organization.[88] Episodic volunteers generally have less time to contribute than their baby boomer counterparts who have exited the workforce.[89] They still contribute to the community through volunteering and are usually motivated by fun social activities and immediate

[87] David Reingold and Jessica Nesbit, "Volunteer Growth in America: A Review of Trends since 1974" (research report, Corporation for National and Community Service, 2006), 4, https://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/06_1203_volunteer_growth.pdf.

[88] Reingold and Nesbit, 4.

[89] Reingold and Nesbit.

outcomes.[90] Organizers must consider the motivation of these volunteers to make their volunteer experiences successful. By understanding episodic volunteer motivations, organizers can encourage this new type of volunteer to return to an organization, rather than jumping around from cause to cause.

Young people *are* becoming involved in community volunteering. Between 1989 and 2005, teenager volunteerism in activities that promote youth service or educational organizations increased by 10 percent.[91] Increased volunteerism for people in their teens is believed to be at least in part connected to the increase in school-based service-learning and community-service opportunities.[92] Service-based volunteer requirements for graduation have become increasingly common for high school students since the late 1980s.[93] While these teenage volunteers are eager to help with immediate tasks, they cannot fill roles that require specialized training, or that require retained knowledge for future volunteer events with the same organization.

However well-intentioned volunteers may be, untrained volunteers pose a problem for responders in times of disaster. Episodic volunteers spend very little time with any one organization. They are untrained or very minimally trained, posing a safety and liability concern.[94] It is difficult to provide training for volunteers who are neither previously committed to nor trained with an organization prior to an emergency event. While disaster response inherently places all people at risk, untrained volunteer responders are at an increased risk. According to a Johns Hopkins study, 19 out of 24 nongovernmental volunteer organizations had spontaneous volunteers show up for major disasters such as hurricanes. Lauren Sauer, a disaster training expert and faculty member at Johns Hopkins

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[90] "Differences Between Key and Episodic Volunteers," Walla Walla Community College, accessed March 1, 2018, https://www.wwcc.edu/CMS/fileadmin/PDF/Learning_Center/Key_and_Episodic_Volunteers.pdf#page=1&zoom=auto,-99,798.

[91] Reingold and Nesbit, "Volunteer Growth in America," 3.

[92] Reingold and Nesbit, 2.

[93] Reingold and Nesbit, 6.

[94] Lauren Sauer, "Untrained Volunteers May Do Harm as Well as Good during Disasters," Johns Hopksin Medicine, March 26, 2014, https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/untrained_volunteers_may_do_harm_as_well_as_good_during_disasters_johns_hopkins_study_finds.

University School of Medicine's Department of Emergency Medicine, explained, "While a majority of those organizations said they found such volunteers useful, 42 percent reported that spontaneous volunteers had been injured in the response, and there were two reported deaths among them."[95] With such a high injury rate, organizations that rely on volunteers need to take action to reduce the risk associated with untrained volunteer responders.[96]

2. Importance of Training and CERT Programs

Ensuring volunteers can respond properly to emergency situations requires training. Part of the National Incident Management System requires that resources—in this case, people—be qualified and certified in whatever function that they will be performing during an emergency. Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training is a consistent mechanism that can ensure all volunteers meet training requirements. The current FEMA-approved CERT training course takes about 20 hours for the volunteer, and provides a basic understanding of emergency response.[97] The course covers fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations.[98] In addition, CERT training teaches hands-on skills that allow volunteers to practice in a classroom setting. A national-level model, the CERT program can provide consistent training to all possible volunteer responders across local, regional, and national lines; it provides practical information that individuals can apply to their practices immediately when helping in disaster preparedness or recovery. In case their community is struck, CERT-trained volunteers can assist themselves, their families, their immediate neighborhood, and community affiliations, reducing the stress on the emergency system.

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[95] Sauer.

[96] Sauer.

[97] "Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training," University of California Santa Cruz, last modified May 29, 2015, https://oes.ucsc.edu/public-education/cert/index.html.

[98] "Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training," County of Los Angeles Fire Department, accessed March 1, 2018, https://www.fire.lacounty.gov/lacofd-cert-program/.

3. Background Checks

In addition to being untrained, unaffiliated or un-vetted episodic volunteers could pose other threats to the community. It is rare for nongovernmental organizations to run background checks on volunteers. While background checks do not ensure that volunteers will behave honestly and with integrity, they do show that an organization is paying attention to its members.[99] Government agencies are more concerned about the legal aspects and may have more access to background checks. In an article in *Emergency Management* magazine, Charles Kemker of the Rush County Emergency Management Agency suggests that background checks may help an agency fortify its legal defense. He states, "A background check may show the agency had done its due diligence to ensure the public good, perhaps absolving the agency of some culpability."[100]

If volunteer organizations run background checks on its members, the government may be more likely to share its resources with those organizations. Texas does it this way. According to Jacob Dirr in *Emergency Management* magazine, "There is the potential for our volunteers to come into contact with children or vulnerable populations, and we want to ensure that in those instances we are doing our due diligence."[101] While the government often sets the standard, communities may want to set their own minimum expectations to ensure checks are properly executed. In Texas, the police department performs those checks. Additionally, many states set standards for persons who apply to work with children or vulnerable adults.[102] In Iowa, criminal records, which include child and adult abuse, are easily accessible via an online system for a $15 fee.[103] There are options in the private sector as well. First Advantage, Accu Source and True Hire's subsidiary Background Checks for Volunteers were all mentioned in *Emergency Management* as

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[99] Adam Stone, "Emergency Managers Debate the Need for Background Checks for Volunteers," *Emergency Management*, April 22, 2015, http://www.govtech.com/em/training/Emergency-Managers-Debate-Background-Checks-for-Volunteers.html.

[100] Stone.

[101] Stone.

[102] Stone.

[103] "Stone.

vendors that provide background check services for a fee.[104] Law enforcement may also be a partner to provide this service at a decreased cost.

4. Engaging Volunteers

Capturing volunteers for any program today is difficult because of the investment needed in time and money. In addition to specialized training for volunteers, most response organizations want a background check. However, maintaining volunteers in non-emergent times is even more difficult. In an interview with Margaret Stein in *Emergency Management*, Suu-Va Tai, a disaster program specialist with California Volunteers, explains the issues that organizations have maintaining volunteers: "You need to find different activities to engage with them and keep them training."[105] People with good intentions do respond during disasters, but without the proper training and preparations, their assistance may be less helpful than their good intentions. Unless the volunteer organization can keep them engaged, they will lose interest and find something else to fill their time.

Volunteers offer a valuable contribution to the community; they increase emergency responders' capacity to serve the community in times of need. However, volunteers are not free.[106] It takes considerable time and resources to maintain them. Community leaders need to be aware that volunteers need special tending. This tending is done less and less by social and religious organizations these days, which means careful consideration must be given to training them properly, checking into their backgrounds, and finding opportunities to maintain their engagement. Without volunteers, communities may be unable to meet their citizens' needs when disaster strikes.

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[104] Stone, "Emergency Managers."

[105] Margaret Steen, "How to Recruit, Retain and Organize Volunteers," *Emergency Management*, September 15, 2014, http://www.govtech.com/em/training/How-to-Recruit-Retain-Organize-Volunteers.html.

[106] Sarah Jane Rehnborg et al., *Strategic Volunteer Engagement: A Guide for Nonprofit and Public Sector Leaders* (Austin: University of Texas at Austin, 2009), https://www.volunteeralive.org/docs/Strategic%20Volunteer%20Engagement.pdf.

III. FEMA'S STRUCTURE AND THE WHOLE-COMMUNITY DILEMMA

Volunteerism efforts in the United States prior to 9/11 were largely unstructured by the government. Because of the devastation following the attacks, however, it became necessary to organize volunteer efforts at the federal level. President George W. Bush introduced the Citizen Corps program, run by FEMA, in 2002. Its goal was "to capture the spirit of service … to help coordinate the volunteer activities that will make our communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to any emergency situation."[107] Enthusiasm for Citizen Corps was initially high. Five programs were introduced under its umbrella: Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training, Volunteers in Police Service, Medical Reserve Corps, Neighborhood Watch, and Fire Corps. These programs were to be the foundation upon which the country could build volunteers to support first responders during disasters. However, the programs' robustness across the country varies; as of 2018, FEMA is still struggling to engage citizen volunteers.

A. WHOLE COMMUNITY AND FEDERAL DOCTRINE

The U.S. government expects that all its citizens are preparing for disasters together as a nation—the lynchpin of FEMA's whole-community approach. According to the Department of Homeland Security (under which FEMA operates), the whole community includes "individuals and communities, the private and nonprofit sectors, faith-based organizations, and all government (local, regional/metropolitan), state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and Federal."[108] Together, DHS expects that these partners will make the nation "secure and resilient to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk."[109] "Preparedness," DHS stresses,

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[107] "Citizen Corps," DHS, accessed May 12, 2017, https://www.ready.gov/about-citizen-corps.

[108] DHS, *National Preparedness Goal*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: DHS, 2015), www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1443799615171-2aae90be55041740f97e8532fc680d40/National_Preparedness_Goal_2nd_Edition.pdf.

[109] DHS.

"is the shared responsibility of our entire nation."[110] These calls to action, however, appear in the National Preparedness Goal: a document that is not commonly read by the public.

The National Preparedness Goal was created as a result of Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD-8), which tasked FEMA and certain administrators to plan for improved preparedness. This policy directive calls on federal departments and agencies to work with an "all-of-nation approach."[111] Both the National Preparedness Goal and PPD-8 assume that U.S. citizens are aware of, and willing to embrace the responsibility of, whole-community response. Based on the general decline of participation in social and religious organizations, however, it is unlikely that citizens are getting this message and engaging in whole-community preparedness.

1. National Preparedness Goal and Budget

In 2017, nearly a quarter of the DHS budget was allocated toward protecting the community from disasters—a substantial contribution, which supports disaster relief, as well as grants for state and local governments for prevention and mitigation.[112] The federal government does not, however, directly allocate funds to whole-community projects or community engagement in accordance with the National Preparedness Goal. If funding these programs is an indicator of importance, whole-community preparedness appears to matter very little when it trickles down to the state and local level. Although money for whole-community programs is available through Citizen Corps, it is allocated toward other investments.

2. National Frameworks, Mission Areas, and Core Capabilities

FEMA's approach to attaining the National Preparedness Goal is through what it calls National Planning Frameworks for five mission areas: prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery. The frameworks establish how responders should

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[110] DHS.

[111] White House, *National Preparedness*, PPD-8 (Washington, DC: White House, 2011), www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/presidential-policy-directive-8-national-preparedness.pdf.

[112] "Budget in Brief: Fiscal Year 2017," DHS, accessed March 4, 2018, 9, /www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/FY2017_BIB-MASTER.pdf.

approach disasters before, during, and after their occurrence, including roles and responsibilities for the community. The frameworks "help us understand how we, as a nation, coordinate, share information, and work together—which ultimately results in a more secure and resilient nation."[113] According to FEMA's website, the frameworks, like all other FEMA guidance, follow a whole-community approach to preparedness, which recognizes that everyone can contribute to and benefit from national preparedness efforts. FEMA states that the intended audience for the framework includes "individuals, families, communities, the private and nonprofit sectors, faith-based organizations, and local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and federal governments"—in other words, the whole community.[114]

The five framework mission areas comprise 32 core capabilities designed to help jurisdictions focus their planning efforts.[115] Some core capabilities overlap mission areas, and others are concentrated under one mission area. Figure 7 shows the five mission areas and how the core capabilities align with them; the top, shaded rows in the table show capabilities that align with multiple mission areas.[116] These mission areas tend to be consistent for most disasters.

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[113] "National Planning Frameworks," FEMA, accessed March 4, 2018, https://www.fema.gov/national-planning-frameworks.

[114] FEMA.

[115] "Core Capabilities," FEMA, last updated February 7, 2018, https://www.fema.gov/core-capabilities.

[116] Timothy Riecker, "Understanding and Using the Core Capabilities," *Exploring Management & Homeland Security* (blog), December 17, 2015, https://triecker.wordpress.com/2015/12/17/understanding-and-using-the-core-capabilities/.

National Preparedness Goal 32 Core Capabilities

Prevention	Protection	Response	Recovery	Mitigation
Planning	Planning	Planning	Planning	Planning
Operational Coordination	Operational Coordination	Operational Coordination	Operational Coordination	Operational Coordination
Public Information & Warning	Public Information & Warning	Public Information & Warning	Public Information & Warning	Public Information & Warning
Intel and Information Sharing	Intel and Information Sharing	Infrastructure Systems	Infrastructure Systems	Community Resilience
Screening, Search & Detection	Screening, Search & Detection	Critical Transportation	Economic Recovery	Long-term Vulnerability Reduction
Interdiction & Disruption	Interdiction & Disruption	Environmental Response/Health & Safety	Health & Social Services	Risk & Disaster Resilience Assessment
Forensics & Attribution	Access Control & Identity Verification	Fire Management & Suppression *	Housing	Threat & Hazard Identification
	Cybersecurity	Fatality Management	Natural & Cultural Resources	
	Physical Protective Measures	Mass Care Services		
	Risk Management For Protection Programs & Activities	Mass Search & Rescue Operations		
	Supply Chain Integrity & Security	On-Scene Security, Protection, and Law Enforcement **		
		Operational Communications		
		Logistics & Supply Chain Management **		
		Public Health, Healthcare, & Emergency Medical Services **		
		Situational Assessment		

* New (v 2)
** Re-titled (v 2)

October 2015 – EPS, LLC Based on the National Preparedness Goal, Second Edition (October 2015)

Figure 7. The 32 Core Capabilities[117]

Core capabilities may have varying importance, depending on the type disaster and the jurisdiction. For example, disaster response professionals in hurricane-prone areas must have robust plans for mass-care services and housing—considerations not applicable for a disaster event in which there are limited or no survivors. The core capabilities, like all aspects of preparedness for FEMA, are meant to be addressed by the whole community.

Local government entities are responsible for ensuring that plans are in place for all of the 32 core capabilities, even if outside of their immediate control. For example, the logistics and supply-chain management capability requires that entities "deliver essential commodities, equipment, and services in support of impacted communities and survivors, to include emergency power and fuel support, as well as the coordination of access to

[117] Source: Riecker.

community staples."[118] While local emergency management, police, and fire services do not directly restore power, fuel, and food to an area, this core capability is meant to ensure that emergency responders, in their planning activities, consider providing support to the entities that do provide these services.

B. FUNDING FOR THE WHOLE-COMMUNITY APPROACH

Grant programs are essential to move money from the federal government to local responders. The Homeland Security Grant Program is the mechanism through which FEMA administers money to the various first responders and communities to support prevention and protection efforts, in accordance with the National Preparedness Goal.[119] There are three grant programs that support these preparedness activities: the State Homeland Security Grant Program, the Urban Area Security Initiative, and Operation Stonegarden. To emphasize the grantees, FEMA states that the overall grant program "plays an important role in the implementation of the National Preparedness System by supporting the building, sustainment, and delivery of core capabilities essential to achieving the [goal] of a secure and resilient Nation. The building, sustainment, and delivery of these core capabilities require the combined effort of the *whole community*, rather than the exclusive effort of any single organization or level of government" (emphasis added).[120]

Of the three grant programs, the State Homeland Security Grant Program is the only one that applies to all states and territories. Although use of this funding must meet standard guidance, the individual states that receive these grants have some flexibility in how they choose to award the money within their jurisdictions. Based on their own identified gaps, states must choose which projects to allocate the money toward—whether at the regional level, or within local communities. The state guidance for grant allocations does not support whole-community approach any more than the federal guidance does.

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[118] FEMA, "Core Capabilities."

[119] "Fiscal Year 2017 Homeland Security Grant Program," FEMA, last updated June 2, 2017, https://www.fema.gov/fiscal-year-2017-homeland-security-grant-program.

[120] FEMA, "Fiscal Year 2017 Homeland Security Grant Program."

It may therefore not be surprising that states have not spent significant amounts of their homeland security budgets on Citizen Corps and CERT programs or on community engagement, despite FEMA's high priority on whole-community activities.[121] In fact, according to reports from the Office of Inspector General, only fractions of state budgets have been spent on Citizen Corps programs.[122] In 2006 for example, the state of Oklahoma, although it worked hard to provide monthly CERT training activities and online guidance (dedicating more time and commitment to these activities than most states), spent $280,000 on Citizen Corps projects—less than 1 percent of the total $19,497,000 homeland security budget.[123] Even less aggressive allocations have been made by states that are historically prone to disasters. Table 1 shows past funding priorities in four states that had large disasters in 2017 (Oklahoma, Texas, Florida, and California), as well as the percent of the states' total federal budget directed to Citizen Corps and CERT activities—projects that directly support whole-community preparedness.

Table 1. Grant Program Allocations for Homeland Security and Percentage Directly for Whole Community[124]

	2007			2006
	Oklahoma	Texas	Florida	California
State Homeland Security	$5,070,000	$34,400,000	$25,460,000	$47,580,000
Urban Area Security	$4,780,000	$58,540,000	$38,670,000	$136,290,000
Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention	$3,620,000	$24,560,000	$18,180,000	$42,370,000
Citizen Corp	$212,000	$773,000	$625,584	$1,528,000
Metropolitan Medical Response Systems	$516,000	$3,356,000	$1,807,016	$4,181,000
Totals	$14,198,000	$121,629,000	$84,742,600	$231,949,000
% Allocated to Citizen Corps Activities	**1.40%**	**0.60%**	**0.70%**	**0.60%**

Note: numbers in table were audited by the Inspector General in reports published in 2009 and 2010.

[121] DHS, *National Preparedness Goal*.

[122] GAO, *Emergency Preparedness*.

[123] DHS OIG, *Oklahoma Homeland Security Program*, 5.

[124] Adapted from DHS OIG, *Oklahoma Homeland Security Program*; *Florida State Homeland Security Program*; *Texas State Homeland Security Program*.

Because the government has not spent resources on engaging the community, programs like Citizen Corps—and its CERT trainings—are not thriving. With a limited number of employees, the federal government is not capable of independently providing all the necessary assistance for disasters. As the third edition of the National Response Framework explains, "Government resources alone cannot meet all the needs of those affected by major disasters …. [The] whole community is essential to the future of disaster response."[125] FEMA recognizes it cannot be the sole contributor to national preparedness, yet it fails to communicate its message to the American people. Furthermore, many CERT programs used to train the public have gone unfunded and have folded; others, though they may still be listed on CERT training websites, are no longer viable.[126] The programs have lost their host agencies and are now defunct.

The Government Accountability Office took notice of this discrepancy, and of FEMA's poor planning for preparedness efforts. In 2009, the Office noted, "The operating budgets for community preparedness programs currently represent less than one-half of one percent of FEMA's total budget."[127] There is still no direct allocation to the states for whole-community activities in the 2017 FEMA budget, despite FEMA's priority that all "individuals and communities, the private and nonprofit sectors, faith-based organizations" need to be engaged in response efforts.[128]

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[125] DHS, *National Response Framework*, 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: DHS, 2016), 4, www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1466014682982-9bcf8245ba4c60c120aa915abe74e15d/National_Response_Framework3rd.pdf.

[126] GAO, *Emergency Preparedness*.

[127] GAO.

[128] FEMA, *A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management: Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action*, FDOC 104-008-1 (Washington, DC: DHS, 2011), http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1813-25045-0649/whole_community_dec2011__2_.pdf.

C. CONCLUSION

Fifteen years after the creation of Citizen Corps, the successes of its programs are limited. The funding and the enthusiasm needed to create whole-community programs have been largely unrealized. As of summer 2017, updates for the CERT website had not occurred in over a year, showing poor attention to the programs.[129] Funding for Citizen Corps went from $144 million promised at its inception in 2003, to an "allowable" yet non-specific allocation in 2017.[130] This allocation is competing against all the other programs and training activities that fall under the State Homeland Security Grant Program.

A lack of community engagement is apparent during disasters. When flooding, tornados, and straight-line winds cross the Midwest, fires decimate California and Kansas, and earthquakes ravage many areas across the United States, it is a stark reminder that volunteerism and community engagement is dying. FEMA states that the whole community should somehow *enable* participation in national preparedness activities for a wider range of players.[131] Yet FEMA has not enabled citizens. A cynic might argue that citizens are asleep; they are not engaged in their communities or organizations. Volunteers are volunteering with their wallets and a few spare hours, not with commitment to their communities. Similarly, local social and religious programs are failing to maintain membership, demonstrating the dwindling state of engagement in America.

For successful 21st-century disaster response, citizens must engage. In order for whole-community preparedness to work, "all elements of the community must be activated, engaged, and integrated to respond to a major or catastrophic incident."[132] FEMA currently bases its plans on an assumption that there is a whole-community structure already in place at the local level. FEMA assumes that it has communicated the message and that states and local jurisdictions are affirming that message with programs such as CERT training. And although some programs have seen success, community engagement

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[129] "Community Emergency Response Team," FEMA, Ready.gov, accessed March 16, 2018, https://www.ready.gov/community-emergency-response-team.

[130] DHS, "Citizen Corps."

[131] FEMA, *A Whole Community Approach*.

[132] DHS, *National Response Framework*.

across the United States as a whole is not thriving in a consistent and meaningful way. There needs to be a better plan for structuring engagement to make the "whole community" a viable base for American preparedness. The fire service may offer the answer. It has a duty to respond, a need to harness assistance, and it offers the best opportunity for outreach to the public. The analysis of CERT programs that follows provides a look into how the fire service could improve engagement.

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IV. COMPARING ENGAGEMENT ACROSS COMMUNITIES

A fire service–based Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program is one way to assess the level of citizen engagement in a community. When properly implemented, CERT trainings can provide citizens with a foundation for self-sufficiency; they teach citizens how to take care of themselves during disasters, which allows first responders to focus on the most imminent threats to life, ultimately reducing the number of people who are put in harm's way. The cost of disasters cannot be shouldered by government alone; if fire, police, and emergency management services are to successfully respond to disasters, there must be plan that can integrate the public with its rescuers. If maximized and cultivated in the community, CERT programs can produce critical volunteers for disaster response and recovery, essentially providing FEMA's desired whole-community approach.

The CERT curriculum provides comprehensive emergency preparedness training that can help citizens save lives, and reduce their stress during a disaster. The public is generally not aware that CERT training is needed until a disaster strikes—when there are suddenly no lights and no water, and limited access to food and medication. Community members may not know, for instance, how to shut off the gas in their homes if it is leaking, put out a small fire, or bandage wounds without the help of local emergency services. With CERT training, however, they learn skills such as basic first aid techniques and basic fire science, like how to operate a fire extinguisher, shut off a gas meter, and be aware of hazardous materials.[133] CERT students learn how to store the proper food, water, and medicines for their families. In fact, when many volunteer organizations provide emergency preparedness training, they are providing a portion of a CERT program. Implementing Citizen Corps' specific CERT curriculum, however, would give all volunteers more than the basic knowledge they need to be personally prepared. And once individuals are prepared at home, they can be available to for their local communities as volunteers. Although there is no one-size-fits-all approach to community preparedness,

[133] University of California Santa Cruz. "CERT Training."

related programs must fit some standard guidance; haphazardly implemented CERT programs have little value for the community. With some adjustments, however, CERT training can be the key to FEMA's whole-community approach.

This chapter analyzes two CERT programs, one in Los Angeles and the other in Omaha, Nebraska, in order to identify best practices. The two programs differ significantly when it comes to the size of the community, organization of training, and influences within the community itself. They were chosen for this thesis because they both have a fire service component and have had some success, though for different reasons. The Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) CERT program is the country's most developed CERT program, and it has plentiful resources available online. As the author has personal experience with the Omaha CERT program, information about this program is plentiful as well. Individuals within both communities—Los Angeles and Omaha—have shown great volunteer engagement and commitment to the CERT programs. Additional CERT programs across the country are also discussed in this chapter, when information was available, in order to further explore the elements that make CERT programs and volunteer engagement efforts successful. By explaining the evolution of the American community, volunteerism, and disparate CERT programs, this thesis attempts to provide communities with a foundation upon which to grow citizen engagement by way of the fire service.

As follows, this chapter provides a brief overview of the Los Angeles and Omaha fire departments, and a history of their CERT programs—including how the programs are organized, advertised, and modeled, and the ways in which they are successful. It explores the importance of critical management, including volunteer management positions, for the longevity, integration, and support of CERT training by the department and community. Ultimately, the goal of any CERT program is to increase public preparedness and volunteerism. The data provided in this chapter is assessed in Chapter V to evaluate the programs' successes, as well as their failures, and identify best practices.

A. LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT

The LAFD, serving the second largest city in the United States, provides fire and emergency medical response services to approximately four million people.[134] The department has 102 neighborhood fire stations spread across 471 square miles and employs 3,246 uniformed or sworn fire personnel trained in fire suppression and emergency medical services; 1,018 of these personnel are on shift at all times, and 353 comprise support staff.[135] In addition to traditional fire and emergency medical services, the LAFD has extensive capabilities. The following is a partial list of LAFD service teams and areas:

- hazardous material teams
- urban search and rescue
- air operations
- dive teams
- bicycle medics
- communications center run by firefighters and paramedics
- arson investigators
- CERT and cadet program.[136]

Los Angeles has significant need for such a variety of response apparatuses and has had to respond to many disasters. According to the Los Angeles Office of Emergency Management, "during the 1990s, Los Angeles County was one of the most disaster-prone areas of the United States."[137] It regularly experiences significant natural disasters such as floods, fires, and earthquakes.

In order to protect the community, it is important to have the proper amount of personnel in place. The firefighter-to-citizen ratio in Los Angeles is about one firefighter

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[134] "About LAFD," Los Angeles Fire Department, accessed September 24, 2017, http://www.lafd.org/about/about-lafd.

[135] LAFD.

[136] LAFD.

[137] "LA County Hazards," County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office, accessed March 4, 2018, http://lacoa.org/hazards.htm.

for every 1,232 citizens, which is below the national average one firefighter for every 1,120 citizens.[138] In order to continue to balance the budget, LAFD must find creative ways to protect the community and expand its capacity. In times of widespread disaster, LAFD will be short in meeting the needs of the community. Volunteers are one way to help meet those needs.

1. CERT History

American CERT was born in Los Angeles. Assistant Fire Chief Frank Borden started the first CERT program in America as a way to support responders during an earthquake response.[139] Borden traveled to Japan in January 1985 to learn about Japanese response efforts; the Kyoto earthquake struck Japan during his trip, which made him a first-hand observer to response activities that demonstrated the positive impact of citizen engagement. Later that year, Borden also traveled to Mexico just after the Mexico City earthquake—a disaster that took the lives of over 10,000 people. Although the Mexican people had no training, they, too, came to assist; however, without proper training, more than 100 volunteer citizens died assisting during the response efforts.[140] As a result of Borden's observations and efforts, the LAFD created the first CERT class in the United States, graduating 30 students in June 1986—well before FEMA's whole-community approach went into effect.[141] The city provided funding for the program after a 6.1-magnitude earthquake in Whittier, California, in 1987, which killed six and injured more than 100.[142] Seven years later, the National Fire Academy and Emergency Management Institute, under FEMA, adopted CERT training into a national curriculum. The LAFD has continued to fund the CERT program, and it has served as the gold standard for large fire departments.

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138 Haynes and Stein, *U.S. Fire Department Profile*, 10.

139 LAFD, "CERT Training."

140 "How CERT Got Started," Best Southwest Regional C.E.R.T. Program, accessed March 16, 2018, http://www.cert-bswr.org/about-our-organization.

141 LAFD, "CERT Training."

142 "1987 Earthquake Rocks Southern California," History.com, accessed March 4, 2018, www.history.com/this-day-in-history/earthquake-rocks-southern-california.

2. Training

The LAFD has the most consistent CERT program run under a single-city jurisdiction. In 2015, the LAFD had trained 57,000–60,000 citizens in over 970 CERT classes since the program's 1986 inception.[143] The fire department–based program offers classes an average of 70 times per year, utilizing 1,225 instructor hours in the classroom annually.[144] These instructors also must allocate time for scheduling, planning, and coordinating classes as well as driving to and from class. The LAFD's CERT classes are held at various locations across the city in an effort to engage as many citizens as possible. The LAFD has committed tremendous time toward training citizen volunteers.

Citizens who take CERT classes receive personal benefits for their time in the form of individual preparedness. They learn how to prepare themselves, as well as their families and friends, for a disaster.[145] CERT responders receive a disaster kit that comes equipped with a vest, a hard hat, safety goggles, work gloves, and dust mask. Emergency response kits can also include a flashlight, first aid kit, waterproof poncho, four-in-one gas and water shutoff multi-tool, as well as other items that vary according to grant funding and community requirements.[146] Additional items are available for purchase from a variety of vendors. The CERT training does not require volunteerism once the course is complete; citizens may choose to save the training, and the kit, for personal preparedness.

3. Customer Service

The LAFD offers a variety of class times for CERT training. Classes start between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. and last for two and a half hours per class. There are seven classes needed to complete the course. A course can be made up at an alternate

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[143] Stacy Gerlich, "How LAFD CERT May Be Understood as a Smart Practice: How it Is Pioneering a Transition to Whole Community CERT and How it Can Serve as the Template for CERT Programs Nationally?" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2014), xv; LAFD, "CERT Training."

[144] LAFD, "CERT Training."

[145] "Call-Out Team Registration," City of Los Angeles CERT, accessed March 4, 2018, www.cert-la.com/cert-la-news/call-out-team-registration-3/.

[146] LAFD, "CERT Training."

location if necessary with the proper forms completed.[147] This is a good schedule for those who arrive home every evening in time to attend class, and it may allow employers to offer classes during work hours and still gain productivity from a workday. Instructors travel to class locations, minimizing travel for citizens or employers. Because the material is broken into seven sessions, the information is more manageable to learn and retain.

Signing up for LAFD CERT courses is easy. Signup is advertised on the LAFD website, and registration through Eventbrite is free for anyone 18 years of age or over.[148] There is also a phone number that citizens can call to register for a class, making public access easy and accommodating.[149] The LAFD also schedules CERT classes directly for groups. There are two requirements for group classes: the group must include 20 or more participants, and must provide a location for the class.[150] The group training could be helpful for businesses that must meet guidelines for emergency preparedness in the workplace. In-house training may also enhance the experience for the participants and allow the organization to focus on individual concerns—for example, a soccer club or an individual school could make their own plans to use CERT-trained volunteers for particular tournaments, or for emergency planning for an active-shooter event.

Not all citizens, however, welcome the neighborhood community participation encouraged by CERT training and the whole-community concept. Writing for an online periodical titled *City Watch*—owned by a Los Angeles newspaper that states its purpose is to "encourage grassroots civic engagement through information, ideas, and perspective"—Bob Gelfeld says "no" when it comes to using CERT volunteers in neighborhoods across Los Angeles.[151] Gelfeld claims that, during a neighborhood event, a new program called Ready Your LA Neighborhood does not fit the needs of Los Angeles citizens. He writes,

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[147] LAFD.

[148] LAFD.

[149] LAFD.

[150] LAFD.

[151] Bob Gelfand, "Blunty Speaking, Los Angeles Is Not Ready for a Major Disaster … Here Are the Inconvenient Facts," CityWatch Los Angeles, September 11, 2017, http://www.citywatchla.com/index.php/los-angeles-for-rss/13989-bluntly-speaking-los-angeles-is-not-ready-for-a-major-disaster-here-are-the-inconvenient-facts.

> In short, the *Ready Your LA Neighborhood* proposal requires that Los Angeles residents modify their social culture. We are being asked to become more gregarious in a way that does not automatically fit the city dweller. The problem is that it demands of us city dwellers something that we are not all that used to. It expects us to know our neighbors at a level akin to some television comedy about country folk.[152]

While Gelfeld's statement certainly does not speak for the entire community of Los Angeles, it does seem to reflect declining social connections since the 1950s. Sentiments like this make creating neighborhood volunteerism and improving safety within smaller subsections of a community even more difficult for large metropolitan departments.

While the LAFD provides does provide CERT training, it does not require participants to volunteer for the department upon program completion. The department does, however, have a plan to incorporate volunteers. LAFD CERT volunteers must meet the following requirements:

1. Be at least 18 years old and take the CERT training.
2. Have a volunteer enrollment form on file.
3. Have a signed copy of LAFD volunteer acknowledgement of policies on file.
4. Sign up online.
5. Complete the following classes:
    - IS-100.B: Introduction to Incident Command System
    - IS-200.B: ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents
    - IS-700.A: National Incident Management System (NIMS) An Introduction
    - IS-315: CERT Supplemental Training: The Incident Command System.
6. Complete the "Call Out Team Training" class presented twice a year.
7. Submit certificates for review and acceptance.

    * If you are accepted, you will be sworn in as a Disaster Service Worker.[153]

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[152] Gelfand.

[153] City of Los Angeles CERT, "Call-Out Team Registration."

4. Instruction and Leadership

The LAFD provides uniformed firefighters to serve as CERT instructors—a critical component to the program's success. Having subject-matter experts who have performed the work personally to teach CERT classes boosts the program's creditability. Students can ask questions relevant to real situations and expect answers that reflect real-world experience.

Under the instruction of its firefighters, the LAFD CERT program has garnered community interest. LAFD fills 70 classes per year and maintains 215 call out volunteers, who are distributed among the 14 battalions located in neighborhoods across the city.[154] These community volunteers support CERT growth and prevent the social decline experienced by other community organizations, as discussed in Chapter II. Furthermore, the volunteers support the local responders. When describing volunteer work at the LaTuna fire station, one CERT members stated, with pride, that the CERT members are a "serious force multiplier for the LAFD."[155] Another CERT member reports being "grateful to serve," calling it "a privilege."[156] Additionally, individual CERT teams (rather than the LAFD as a whole) maintain an online presence on Facebook and Twitter, showing that small seeds are beginning to grow around the city, building community engagement.

The LAFD has two full-time captains assigned to the CERT program, who are responsible for developing policies and procedures and communicating with community partners in order to ensure program success.[157] Stacy Gerlich, who served as the CERT program manager for over seven years, was recognized by President Barack Obama as a "Champion for Change for Community Preparedness and Resilience," along with 17 other

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[154] Gerlich, "LAFD CERT," 41, 33.

[155] Chin Thamassaengsri, "La Tuna Fire," City of Los Angeles CERT, accessed March 4, 2018, http://www.cert-la.com/wildfires/la-tuna-fire-sept-2017/.

[156] Jacqueline Kozak, "Reflections: La Tuna Fire," City of Los Angeles CERT, accessed March 4, 2018, http://www.cert-la.com/wildfires/la-tuna-fire-sept-2017/.

[157] "LAFD CERT Coordinator Guide," City of Los Angeles CERT, accessed March 4, 2018, http://www.cert-la.com/downloads/coordinators/APPENDICES.pdf.

volunteer coordinators across the nation.[158] Captain Gerlich and the other honorees were acknowledged for "preparing communities for disasters and helping them respond and recover, bringing members of the whole community together—private businesses, local government, community and faith-based organizations, and individual citizens—to make a difference."[159] She continues to serve the LAFD in various other roles related to citizen engagement.

5. Connecting with the Community

While social networks and social media may be distracting America, they can have a positive impact as well: they allow LAFD to get the attention of large numbers of people. Volunteers sign up for the LAFD's CERT training through Eventbrite, a social network used to publish community activities, sell tickets, and advertise events across multiple online social platforms. Use of Eventbrite helps CERT classes get more exposure in the community, and the invitations reach more people across Los Angeles. Without this large online presence, activities across all 471 square miles of Los Angeles would be difficult to discover. For those inclined to become involved online, the LAFD has a page dedicated strictly to online access for LAFD CERT training, and individual battalion Facebook pages—as well as Twitter profiles—through which citizens can access their local fire stations.[160] Because Los Angeles is so big and contains many disconnect neighborhoods and groups, these social media outlets may be a way to get the word out to citizens who have an interest in CERT. In addition, the LAFD has a CERT training channel through YouTube. The LAFD website also links citizens to training opportunities directly from FEMA, as well as the Kansas City CERT program, for additional training.[161]

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[158] "Champions of Change: Community Preparedness and Resilience," White House, accessed September 26, 2017, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/champions/community-preparedness-and-resilience.

[159] White House.

[160] "CERT LA Social Media Links," City of Los Angeles CERT, accessed March 4, 2018, http://www.cert-la.com/cert-la-news/cert-la-social-media-links.

[161] City of Los Angeles CERT.

Using these social media tools to notify the public, the LAFD—and other fire departments across the nation—can invoke public trust, display the knowledge they have to offer, and bolster department credibility. After that, however, it is up to the fire department to achieve whole-community engagement. With programs like CERT, the LAFD has made significant strides to engage the public and improve community preparedness.

B. OMAHA FIRE DEPARTMENT

Although the Omaha Fire Department is significantly smaller than the LAFD, it, too, has significant assets and responsibilities. The City of Omaha Fire and Rescue Department (OFD) serves 500,000 people in fire and emergency medical services response, covering the 41st largest city in the United States with 24 neighborhood fire stations across 179 square miles.[162] Omaha has 652 uniformed or sworn fire personnel trained in fire suppression, 40 of whom serve in the bureau by union contract.[163] There are 187 firefighters on shift at all times and six support staff to serve the Omaha community; as of 2015, one support staff position is allocated to community risk reduction efforts for the Spanish community and five to administrative support. In 2005, Omaha received an Urban Area Security Initiative Grant to begin a community emergency response program. In addition to traditional fire and emergency medical response, the OFD supports:

- hazardous material teams,
- dive teams,
- arson specialists,
- fire prevention, which encompasses public education, and
- a Lincoln Fire Department-based Urban Search and Rescue Team.

[162] Omaha Fire Department, accessed September 27, 2017, https://www.omaha-fire.org.

[163] "Agreement between the City of Omaha, Nebraska and Professional Firefighters Association of Omaha, Local No. 385 Affiliated with the International Association of Firefighters, AFL-CIO-CLC," City of Omaha, accessed March 4, 2018, 121, https://hr.cityofomaha.org/images/stories/public_documents/union_contracts/2015-2018-Fire-Labor-Agreement-non-red-lined-version.pdf.

1. CERT History

The OFD sponsored the Omaha/Douglas County CERT program in 2005. According to an assistant chief bulletin, "the main goal of the relationship [was] to better coordinate CERT's community involvement, training, support and response in the event of a regional or community disaster."[164] In order to do so, the fire department hired a contract instructor to coordinate the efforts. No internal personnel were assigned to the program. The bulletin goes on to discuss coordination efforts among multiple organizations, all under the homeland security program, that could work together to assist emergency responders when needed. "In addition the Omaha Fire Department will provide assistance with some advanced training for certain qualified CERT volunteers."[165]

This bulletin provided the foundational understanding of CERT efforts in Omaha for Omaha Fire Department employees. The bulletin, however, does clearly state that "the Fire Department is committed to the development and support of [the] program."[166] To support the program, the OFD supplied instructors, who received overtime pay from grant funds to oversee the CERT operations. However, whereas most fire departments eventually have clear and established procedures, no written standard operating procedures ever emerged for the CERT program. Although draft documentation was written, it was never published within the department. When CERT procedures migrated to Papillion Fire, however, this was inconsequential.

2. Training

Training statistics related to the OFD CERT program are inconsistent and unpublished, and some training records were unavailable due to transfer between departments. There was data to suggest that both the Omaha metropolitan area and the OFD did receive benefit from CERT activities, or from other sister programs related to CERT. The OFD 2005–2007 annual reports did acknowledge CERT training; however,

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[164] John York, "Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program" (BUL FAC 2005-02, Omaha Fire Department, 2005).

[165] York.

[166] York.

because the information is not reported in the same format from year to year, the reports do not help determine how many people received CERT training, how many volunteer hours were donated, or consistent areas of operation. In 2005, the first year of the program, the OFD reported 27 days (198 hours) of training; in the second year, 2006, OFD reported eight time periods during which the department offered CERT training for three consecutive days and 205 hours of total training.[167] The trainings lasted for 25 hours over a three-day period, with one training session lasting for 30 hours. Specific additional training beyond the basic CERT curriculum was also provided for county court employees. There was a significant decrease in training during the third year of the program, 2007, when the department logged only three months of CERT training throughout the entire year. Subsequent OFD annual reports that mentioned CERT training remarked that the program was valuable, but provided no statistical information.[168] As mentioned, there were no uniformed personnel assigned to represent the OFD CERT program. With no fire service champion, OFD CERT training dissolved in 2008.

After the formal OFD CERT training dissolved, those who were involved were left looking for a new place to engage. A report from an OFD Fire Corp program demonstrates that volunteers drifted away from formal CERT programs in favor of a hybrid CERT/Explorers program (available for those under 18 years of age) or a Fire Corps volunteer program.[169] Many volunteers, however, did follow the CERT program to a new sponsoring agency: the Papillion Fire Department, a suburban fire district in the Omaha metropolitan area). In 2008, there were only 124 citizens in Omaha officially trained in CERT; however, 252 previously trained CERT members were still working to advance their emergency preparedness training by taking classes in hazardous materials awareness, damage assessment, use of radios, and leadership.[170]

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[167] Omaha Fire Department, "Omaha Fire Department 2005 Annual Report" (report, Omaha Fire Department, 2005), 45; "Omaha Fire Department 2006 Annual Report" (report, Omaha Fire Department, 2006), 50.

[168] "Annual Reports," Omaha Fire Department," accessed March 16, 2018, /www.omaha-fire.org/ about-us/other-information/ofd-annual-report.

[169] Omaha Fire & Rescue Explorers, "Omaha Fire Department Explorers Post 535 & Fire Corps Volunteers Year 2011" (report FB 176 167, Omaha Fire Department, 2011).

[170] Keith Deiml, "Public Education Surpasses Last Year," *CERTified* 3, no. 4 (April 2009): 1.

In March 2009, the CERT program in Omaha reported that it had trained 139 citizens during the first three months of the year; 93 were city of Bellevue employees (a suburb of Omaha), which shows a considerable community commitment—an average of over 46 employees from the city were trained per month between January and March 2009.[171] The Bellevue employees were the third city-based group to receive training. These employees could be a valuable resource to call upon in times of disaster.

3. Customer Service

CERT training hours during 2006 were offered almost exclusively on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. An exception was a CERT training on Wednesday through Friday between March 29 and 31 to accommodate federal court personnel. Additionally, two 10-hour classes were offered on Saturdays, and another on a Saturday and Thursday, showing reasonable attempts to accommodate citizens' schedules. Although Omaha offered fewer classes than the LAFD, the OFD made attempts to accommodate schedules for customer convenience. The class hours, however, were always long and did not break down the information into small sections. It appears the training program had to be completed in no more than three sessions, suggesting that each session lasted about 8–10 hours.

4. Instruction and Leadership

The OFD CERT program did not commit uniformed firefighters as CERT instructors. A contractor was hired to oversee the project and adjunct instructors were brought in to do training. Overtime was paid to various OFD employees to oversee the practical skills portion of CERT; however, no one firefighter was dedicated to the overall CERT program implementation. Without committed leadership from the fire service, a simple change of command staff could leave the program without support. Having the subject-matter experts—uniformed firefighters—to teach CERT gives credibility to the program. Having a ranking officer—a captain or battalion chief—in charge of the CERT program training, implementation, and project development further allows the program's importance to be communicated both inside and outside the fire department. A contractor

[171] Deiml, 1.

or trainer cannot champion the CERT program; in an organization such as a fire department, which has a strong rank structure and chain of command, leadership from the organization must be committed to the effort. The Omaha Fire Department did however gain volunteers from CERT involvement.

C. CONCLUSION

Fire based CERT programs are not accomplished in a standard way across the country. There are various approaches to providing CERT programs and LAFD and Omaha are just examples that can have many variations. LAFD CERT has made considerable commitments to training volunteers. They provide a significant number of opportunities to the community to takie the training, they have staff that are captivating to the audience and a means to sign up that is user friendly. LAFD has also made a commitment to the CERT program. Omaha Fire Department made very little commitment to CERT. Both programs however have been able to capture volunteer engagement for at least a period of time in their community. The combinations that seem to have positive impacts on the success of CERT will be assessed in Chapter V.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CERT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Volunteerism in America has changed. Figuring out how to engage modern volunteers is the job of all emergency responders, as successful preparedness across the nation depends on volunteer participation. In the fire service, the culture of responders does not readily welcome assistance from outside actors (volunteers), so responders must be integrated into the development of a new volunteer process. CERT is the connection. FEMA, communities, and local fire chiefs must work together to ensure the whole community is prepared.

With volunteerism changes in mind, this chapter assesses the LAFD and OFD CERT programs, including unexpected findings, to determine the factors that make a CERT program successful. While the program data is inconsistent between the two fire departments, offering limited opportunities for direct comparison, both programs provide valuable information about best practices. The chapter also takes into consideration Stacy Gerlich's thesis, which established a baseline for smart practices in CERT programs. Based on these findings, the chapter makes recommendations about CERT program implementation and volunteer engagement for fire departments.

It is important, however, to acknowledge that there are significant budget challenges for the federal government, state governments, fire officials, and city administrators. Committing to a CERT program and managing volunteers may not show a return on investment for many years; therefore, making the commitment to these resources may be fiscally difficult to justify. In the absence of FEMA-mandated standards for grant money allocation, state and local governments have not measured current return on investment, making it difficult to use data to support program success. Union contracts, public will, and emerging threats all compete for funding. Decision makers must determine where to allocate limited resources under ever-increasing obligations. This chapter presents considerations for allocating those resources to community preparedness.

A. TRAINING STATISTICS AND RESULTS

Volunteers recruitment—measuring the number of volunteers trained as well as the number of trainees giving back volunteer hours to CERT programs—is one way to measure program success. The LAFD has trained more CERT members than any one single community in the nation.[172] The LAFD has held about 970 CERT classes, training 57,000 citizens since the program's inception.[173] This is an incredible number of trained volunteers, but just to meet the program's goal to train 10 percent of the population, or about 400,000 people, will take 210 years at the current rate.[174] They will never meet their long-term goal.

For all the effort that LAFD puts forth, in 2013 the department yielded approximately 211 active volunteers working on a "call out" team. This team received an additional 34–77 hours of training beyond the 20 hours of basic CERT, representing a high level of commitment not typical of today's volunteers.[175] LAFD CERT volunteers account for 4,500 hours donated annually; these volunteers assisted during the La Tuna fire response in late 2017, organizing donations and providing food and water to firefighters, as well as during a 2016 funeral, when the provided help with setup and hydration.[176] Volunteer efforts have resulted in a savings of $99,000 for the department.[177] However, participation of volunteers in LAFD needs represents only .005 percent of the total volunteers trained, a very small number of volunteers for the amount of commitment invested. Additionally, LAFD has many active battalions across Los Angeles, and it is not apparent if volunteer hours are being captured from those battalions independently, or just at large events; these comparisons therefore assume that the 4,500 hours donated spanned across all LAFD events. This assumption is supported by the LAFD CERT calendar, which

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172 "Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Dataset," FEMA, last updated November 4, 2015, https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/107886.

173 City of Los Angeles CERT.

174 Gerlich, "LAFD CERT," 70.

175 Gerlich, 51.

176 "Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) | Los Angeles Fire Department"; Gerlich.

177 Gerlich.

includes very few events for volunteers to sign up for, but many trainings. Many calendar months do not offer any volunteer opportunities.

In the case of Omaha inconsistently reported data was only available for the years 2005 through 2011. In 2011—although the OFD's interaction with the CERT program appeared to be minimal since 2007—the OFD enjoyed significant benefit from volunteers in the Omaha metro area. Between 2005 and 2007, OFD taught 20 CERT classes. The exact number of trained volunteers is not known, but it is estimated that there were about 400, with 20 full classes of 20 students each. In 2009, the Omaha metro area received funding to double the number of CERT trainings, further confirming this estimate. Even though CERT transferred to another host organization, Omaha CERTs' 10 loosely affiliated volunteers donated 4,563 hours of volunteer time to the OFD over the course of a year, a .25-percent yield, and the equivalent of more than two fulltime staff positions—about equal to LAFD's yield.[178] Most of the volunteer time was dedicated to public education events, according to OFD reports. After the CERT program left OFD, many of the CERT volunteers transferred their efforts to the Public Education Division under the leadership of Captain David Mann, who became the glue that held the volunteers together.

At this point, Omaha CERT volunteers assisted with 63 school assemblies, helping to guide 16,000 children through fire prevention activities.[179] They also used the fire safety trailer for Scouts Day, September Fest, Millard and Elkhorn Days, safety expos, summer camps, and park activities. In addition, this group of volunteers taught the Explorer Program. Two of the volunteers used wheelchairs, yet dedicated the greatest number of hours to assist OFD. These volunteers would have limited ability to perform some of the CERT training curriculum without accommodations but added considerable contributions in coordinating, attending or actively assisting in most of the above events allowing the fire service to meet the needs of the community. At this time, Captain Mann was the only permanent staff member assigned to the Public Education Division. These programs would not have been possible without additional fire personnel or volunteer assistance of CERT.

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[178] David Duncan, "Omaha Fire Department Explorers Post 535 & Fire Corps Volunteers Year 2011" (report, Omaha Fire Public Education, 2012).

[179] Omaha Fire & Rescue Explorers, "Post 535 & Fire Corps Volunteers," 4.

The OFD official annual report acknowledges a slightly less robust number of hours, acknowledging 3,720 hours during the same time frame—about 800 fewer hours.[180] Although it is difficult to scrutinize the exact numbers, the data clearly demonstrate that there are significant benefits for the fire service when it trains and utilizes volunteers. Annual reports acknowledge that volunteers assisted in the Public Education Division by answering phones, scheduling school presentations, and assisting at most events. They also delivered smoke detectors to stations.[181] One of the CERT members became a fulltime firefighter, providing a long-term benefit to the department.

When comparing volunteer hours Omaha yielded a significantly higher return on investment as it trained less than 800 CERT volunteers compared with 56,000 at LAFD and received a nearly equal amount of volunteer hours over a one-year period. Unfortunately for Omaha this was an anomaly and the volunteers ceased to participate annually. Policies for volunteers were not in place and their participation dwindled and ceased to exist by the time Captain Mann retired in 2013.

B. CUSTOMER SERVICE AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Customer service is a critical component recognized by leaders in the fire service. Retired Fire Chief Alan Brunaci of the Phoenix Fire Department, one of the most highly respected figures in the fire industry who authored books about incident command and safety in the fire service, became passionate about customer service and leadership later in his career. In the first chapter of his book *Essentials of Fire Department Customer Service*, he wrote, "Our essential mission and number one priority is to deliver the best possible service to our customers."[182] To fulfill this mission in CERT programs today, the fire service should give careful consideration to scheduling classes, choosing instructors and a

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[180] Michael F. McDonnell, "2011 Annual Report: Omaha Fire and Rescue Department" (report, Omaha Fire Department, 2011), 60, 69, https://www.omaha-fire.org/images/stories/2011-ANNUAL-REPORT.pdf.

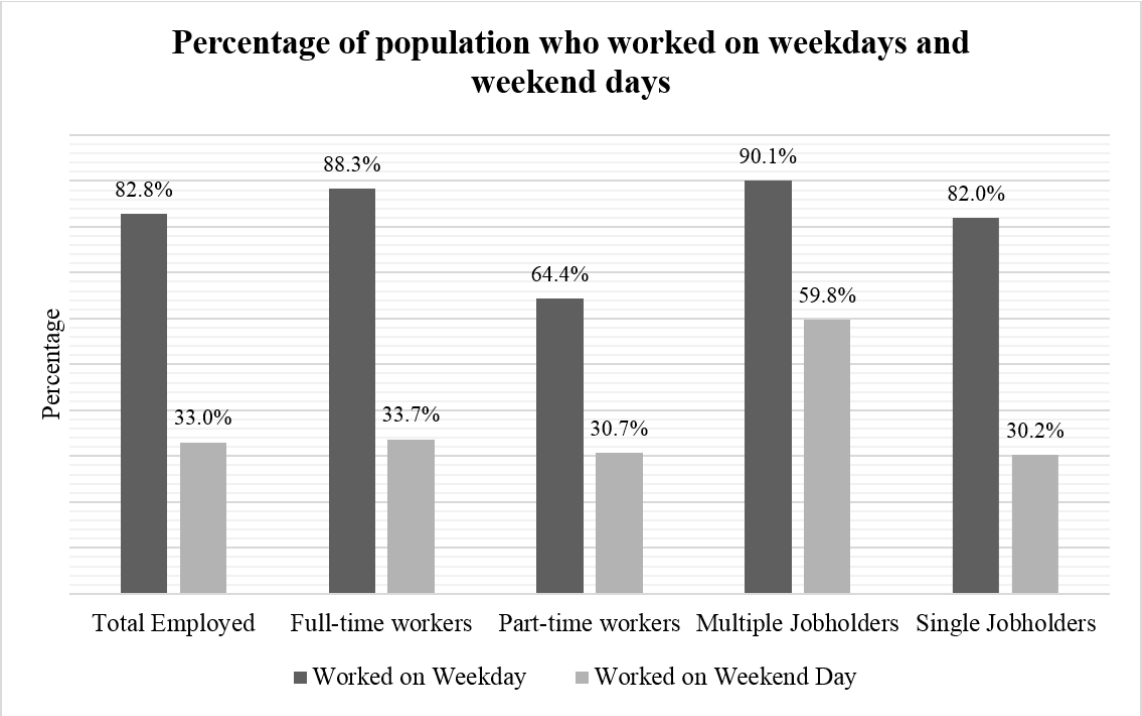
[181] "Annual Reports," Omaha Fire Department, accessed March 7, 2018, https://www.omaha-fire.org/about-us/other-information/ofd-annual-report.

[182] Alan V. Brunacini, *Essentials of Fire Department Customer Service* (Stillwater, OK: Fire Protection Publications, 1996), 9.

liaison that works directly with volunteers, and utilizing volunteers in order to foster a respectful connection with the community.

Fire departments should consider offering CERT programs that have flexible schedules; LAFD and Omaha offer two types of flexible models. LAFD has a consistent schedule of short classes over a longer period of time; this works well for the LAFD, as most classes fill quickly. CERT instruction is provided during the weekday, which offers a consistent schedule for instructors. Omaha generally provides classes on weekends, and the entire training program spans only the course of one weekend. This has worked for OFD in the past, as there was no one employee dedicated to CERT instruction, but employees were offered overtime to oversee CERT activities.

Because fire departments are open 24/7, they can make customer-focused accommodations that foster community engagement when creating class schedules. To accommodate most working citizens' schedules and modern volunteer trends, CERT classes should be offered during weekends, with variable time commitments. For example, training programs that require a seven-week commitment—nearly two months for the LAFD's CERT program—may deter volunteers. Although the LAFD does offer evening classes, they may still be difficult for citizens who work full time to attend; the average citizen has more freedom to volunteer on the weekend (see Figure 8). Strong consideration should therefore be given to providing weekend CERT opportunities.



Because more than 80 percent of the population is tied up at work during the weekday, CERT training should be offered on weekends, when citizens have more free time for volunteer activities.

Figure 8. Population Working Weekdays versus Weekends[183]

[183] Adapted from "Percent of Employed People Who Worked by Day of Week," Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed March 16, 2018, https://www.bls.gov/charts/american-time-use/emp-by-ftpt-job-edu-p.htm.

C. CERT INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

Ideal CERT instructors are existing firefighters who are good educators and who are prepared to be strong program advocates. The lists in Table 2 show the advantages and disadvantages of employing existing first responders—as opposed to civilian volunteers—as CERT instructors.

Table 2. Advantages and Disadvantages of Employing a Professional First Responder as a CERT Trainer[184]

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Has emergency response experience • May have training experience • Quality control easier for fire department • Reliability • Work schedule already set • Credibility • Able to answer follow-up questions • Can develop a relationship between participants and department • Covered under workers' compensation in case of injury	• May not have training experience • Costs more than civilian volunteer

However, assigning firefighters to CERT training duties and as a liaison is not a simple task; neither the OFD or LAFD executed this task perfectly. Omaha never committed an individual firefighter to the CERT program. Instead, the program made sure a training staff firefighter or ranking officer was able to oversee the training process at the training center, but it was a different person every time, each with a different level of interest in participating. The fire department was not responsible for the class, and students showed little buy-in to the program after training was complete. Perhaps by luck Captain Mann was able to draw volunteers into public education to assist the department. This critical liaison engaged 4500 hours of volunteer time. The LAFD, on the other hand, uses

[184] Adapted from Gerlich, "LAFD CERT," 38.

a process called reasonable accommodations: injured firefighters who cannot return to regular duty are assigned to CERT trainer positions. However, these firefighters may or may not have an interest in CERT instruction, and may or may not be qualified instructors. Neither department's technique ensures that a consistent, qualified, and attentive firefighter is available to teach or liaison with CERT classes or volunteers.

Fire departments face staffing roadblocks when attempting to assign qualified CERT instructors. For some departments, staffing is contractual. The National Fire Protection Association recommends that 15 firefighters are always available to be on scene at small residential structure fires, and that each company is staffed with four firefighters, one of whom should be a company officer.[185] In some states, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration also requires that, for every two firefighters who enter an environment that is immediately dangerous to life and health, there must be two responders ready to provide rescue.[186] Clearly, imminent concerns about safety and health of firefighters and citizens alike weigh heavily on the minds of decisions-makers when it comes to staffing. On the surface plugging, a spot on a truck to support numbers may seem like the right move. Community leaders, fire management, and union representatives, however, may consider that the liaison between the fire department and the public is a critical role. Training the public helps reduce risk, which ultimately reduces 911 calls. A well-run CERT training program for the community could provide this service. In Saint Louis, for instance, a community risk-reduction program in 2005 that brought a 25-percent decrease in structure fire calls.[187] Although this type of result does not occur overnight, it is something a well-run CERT program can help achieve.

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[185] National Fire Protection Association, *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*, NFPA 1710 (Quincy, MA: NFPA, 2010).

[186] "Standard Number: 1910.134(g); 1975.3(d)," Occupational Safety and Health Administration, accessed March 16, 2018, https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/standardinterpretations/1998-04-29.

[187] Derrick Sawyer et al., *Community Risk Reduction Doing More with More* (Quincy, MA: National Fire Protection Association, 2016), https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Public-Education/By-topic/Urban/Urban-Task-Force/UrbanPaper2016.ashx?la=en&hash=6A9D0B29F72201136668CBC6BF91BAEFB84FCD25.

It may therefore be in the community's best interest for fire departments to assign the most qualified and motivated firefighters to oversee and champion CERT activities. Good community relations benefit the fire service and bolster a safer community. Unlike an outside contractor or citizen volunteer who has little experience or clout within the fire department, firefighters have the ability to champion a CERT program from *within* the department; this is especially important considering the strong rank structure and chain of command within the fire service. This advocacy from within the department is critical; when the Omaha CERT program began to dissolve, without a fire department–sponsored manager, the volunteers—and their 4,500 or more committed, engaged volunteer hours per year—went away unnoticed.

While staffing decisions for CERT programs may also be affected by staff members' seniority, whether measured by amount of time with the department or by rank, the focus should be on enlisting good educators who have good rapport with the community. According to Scott Carrigan, a 10-year fire service instructor, "A good instructor has a genuine interest in the students and their learning."[188] The International Fire Service Training Association cites several important characteristics of good instructors:

- the ability to understand and work well with people,
- the desire to teach,
- competence in the subject,
- enthusiasm,
- motivation,
- ingenuity and creativity,
- empathy, and
- mediation skills.[189]

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[188] Scott Carrigan, "Qualities of a Good Instructor," *Fire Engineering*, October 1, 2005, http://www.fireengineering.com/articles/print/volume-158/issue-10/features/qualities-of-a-good-instructor.html.

[189] Carrigan.

An article in *EMS World*, a magazine committed to emergency medical services, a similar set of instructor qualities are noted, including:

- commitment,
- creativity,
- availability,
- enthusiasm,
- charm,
- knowledge,
- experience, and
- humility.[190]

These trade journals are in agreement with education field practitioners: the instructor is a critical component to the success of a training program, and instructors should possess many if not all of these qualities. These qualities, however, do not seem to play a significant role in current CERT program staffing choices. As established previously, the public has a high degree of trust in firefighters—more so, even, than in medical providers.[191] They work hard to uphold that trust, and it is important that it is cultivated among volunteers. In *Fire Chief* magazine, Robert Rutledge mentions that the fire services is "the only service in the United States authorized to enter a home, business or property without a search warrant in order to fight a fire and protect the common good of all our population. This gives the firefighters a significant status and platform to speak from that they must continue to hold in high esteem."[192] With this in mind, finding the right fire department employee to represent the CERT program—someone to be the department's face for the community—is of utmost importance.

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[190] Mike Rubin, "Head of the Class," *EMS World*, March 6, 2015, https://www.emsworld.com/article/12051567/qualities-of-a-good-educator.

[191] Mizrahi, Vigoda-Gadot, and Van Ryzin, "Public Sector Management."

[192] Robert Rielage, "Firefighter's Badge," *Fire Chief*, July 17, 2016, https://www.firechief.com/2016/07/17/firefighters-badge-a-tradition-of-public-trust/.

D. DETAILED POLICY

The OFD put very little detail about CERT activities into its internal standard operating procedures. While annual department reports noted policies about equipment use for CERT purposes, the department generally disseminated little information about CERT to its employees. As a result, the CERT program dissolved, largely unnoticed by department staff. CERT-related duties were minimized, went undone, or were taken over by suppression crews. Public education lost a resource; with no department advocate to defend the need for the CERT program, little could be done to re-engage the lost volunteers.

The LAFD has a contrastingly high level of detail about its CERT program in policy, procedures, and documents.[193] No other CERT program, including FEMA's, has the level of structure, both for the internal department and the public, as the LAFD's. The LAFD has Facebook pages, YouTube training videos, and battalion coordinators that all extend communication to the public. Additionally, newsletters, online communications, and reports demonstrate citizen participation, adding to the fire service's positive perception and enhancing customer satisfaction across California. Huntington Beach, California's, CERT program promulgates a newsletter that provides education for CERT members, reports accomplishments—such as a successful airport drill—and showcases future training programs and initiatives, like a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society held by the local CERT program.[194] Media sites for Los Angeles CERT programs showcase volunteers who are not only learning, but enjoying their volunteer experiences. By recognizing their volunteers, these programs have garnered increased participation. The CERT program is entrenched in daily LAFD operations, and in the community.

E. CURRICULUM REFORM FOR CERT

Although CERT programs generally have similar training objectives, the LAFD, OFD, and fire departments across the nation all utilize CERT-trained volunteers in a

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[193] Gerlich, "LAFD CERT"; LACityCERT, "CERT LA Social Media Links"; LAFD, "Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)"; City of Los Angeles CERT, "LAFD CERT Coordinator Guide."

[194] *City of Huntington Beach CERT Newsletter*, May 2017, https://www.huntingtonbeachca.gov/government/departments/fire/cert/newsletters/May-2017.pdf.

fashion that is inconsistent with training objectives. Once volunteers complete CERT training, program objectives state that they should be able to:

1. Describe the types of hazards that are most likely to affect their homes, workplaces, and neighborhoods.
2. Take steps to prepare themselves and their families for a disaster.
3. Describe the functions of CERTs and their role in immediate response.
4. Identify and reduce potential fire hazards in their homes, workplaces, and neighborhoods.
5. Work as a team to apply basic fire suppression strategies, resources, and safety measures to extinguish a pan fire.
6. Apply techniques for opening airways, controlling excessive bleeding, and treating for shock.
7. Conduct triage under simulated disaster conditions.
8. Perform head-to-toe patient assessments.
9. Select and set up a treatment area.
10. Employ basic treatments for various injuries and apply splints to suspected fractures and sprains.
11. Identify planning and sizeup requirements for potential search and rescue situations.
12. Describe the most common techniques for searching a structure.
13. Work as a team to apply safe techniques for debris removal and victim extrication.
14. Describe ways to protect rescuers during search and rescue operations.
15. Describe the post-disaster emotional environment and the steps that rescuers can take to relieve their own stressors and those of disaster survivors.
16. Describe CERT organization and documentation requirements.[195]

[195] FEMA, "CERT Basic Training Participant Manual" (manual, FEMA, 2011), 6, www.fema.gov /media-library-data/1446216182929-02eb347496f7038f9856601f42da700b/Section_2_PM_Intro.pdf.

Objectives 1–4, 15, and 16 are immediately applicable for volunteers when it comes to disaster preparedness and response, reducing the chance that these citizens will need emergency services assistance in the first 72 hours following a disaster. However, many of the fire suppression strategies, emergency medical techniques, and search and rescue operations in objectives 5–14 are rarely utilized by fire department volunteers. In fact, during the La Tuna fire, CERT volunteers "supplied … first responders with water, Gatorade, and later on, with food and needed supplies as our firefighters stayed on the line."[196] Without a doubt, the contribution of the dedicated LAFD CERT team was invaluable to the LAFD firefighters. However, their work showcases that CERT program objectives do little to cover the actual work volunteers will be performing.

CERT training for volunteers may therefore need to be less rigorous in firefighter and medical operations, and more applicable to the actual tasks that volunteers will be asked to perform. For example, some departments report using CERT volunteers for search and rescue missions in forests and fields, but never for missions that occur inside a structure; training for interior search and rescue is therefore not a good use of time during a CERT class. Furthermore, these errant objectives foster unrealistic expectations about the volunteer–fire department relationship, leaving volunteers disillusioned during actual CERT events. These objectives may also prevent some citizens from volunteering if they feel they are unable to perform rigorous duties.

F. DATA AND POLICY

There is little consistent data about the successes and failures of CERT programs across the country. Data is hard to find and, because no one program operates the same way, data that is collected is not easily comparable across fire departments. Data collection and analysis adds validity to nearly everything the fire service does today, yet volunteer information is not properly integrated into fire service data collection. Databases can track the number volunteers, hours worked, certifications and training, background checks, and the impact of volunteer service on the organization and its goals. This data can then be

[196] County of Los Angeles Fire Department, "CERT Training."

reported out to the community, the fire service administration, and the rank-and-file firefighters. Rehnborg et al. recommend using qualitative, quantitative, and financial data to evaluate the success of volunteer use in organization. "Report volunteer involvement successes and highlight accomplishments in your organizational newsletter, reports to funders, website content, and elsewhere," they suggest, "and clip press reports about your organization, watching for the presence of volunteers …. Such metrics can become part of your agency dashboard, something you see and refer to regularly in staff meetings, board discussions, and annual reports."[197]

Detailed information was limited for Omaha's CERT activities. Because CERT was re-homed several times within government organizations, data was more difficult to collect, even within the author's own department. It existed in bits and pieces, but was never fully publicized to the community. The LAFD's CERT program, however, shares data with the community readily. There are several news articles, online documents, and Facebook, Twitter and YouTube links that contribute information about CERT efforts in Los Angeles.[198]

Fire departments should consider integrating information about volunteer involvement into a robust annual report. A fire service annual report gives the community—and potential volunteers—an opportunity to examine the CERT program, and gives fire departments an opportunity to communicate successes in numbers and words. Cowley County, Kansas, Emergency Management has produced consistent annual reports and published the documents on its website from 2012 to 2016. The reports discuss the number of new CERT volunteers trained, annual volunteer hours, training events, and additional engagement, clearly demonstrating a sense of community.[199] The reports also thank the community for its commitment—something Rehnborg et al. identified is missing from many public-sector volunteer programs. They stated, "Someone needs to be assigned

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[197] Rehnborg et al., *Strategic Volunteer Engagement*.

[198] County of Los Angeles Fire Department, "CERT Training"; "CERT LA Social Media Links"; LAFD CERT Battalion 5, "La Tuna Fire," Facebook, September 3, 2017, https://www.facebook.com/lafdcertbatt5/posts/692271747648557.

[199] "Emergency Management Annual Reports," Cowley County, accessed March 7, 2018, http://www.cowleycounty.org/em.

the important task of overseeing the venture (engaging volunteers) of facilitating community involvement, of preparing volunteers for the task at hand, of supporting their ongoing involvement, and of thanking them for the time given."[200] The Cowley County reports recognize volunteers, as well as staff members who receive awards for their dedication. The reports also describe, and include pictures of, appreciation gatherings and holiday celebrations.

Data collection and CERT program standardization need to be coordinated at the national level. Qualitative measures need to be captured and assessed.[201] And FEMA should be the facilitator. The LAFD conducted a survey on June 20, 2012, to assess how other departments are using CERT volunteers in their communities.[202] Table 3 shows a sample of responses from 272 CERT programs, demonstrating the variety of useful opportunities for CERT volunteers.

Table 3. CERT Volunteer Use in the United States[203]

- Damage assessment
- Community education
- Search & rescue
- Flood watch
- Storm notification
- Sheltering
- Vaccination clinic
- Crowd control
- Drills
- Sandbagging

[200] Rehnborg et al., *Strategic Volunteer Engagement*, 5.

[201] Rehnborg et al., 20.

[202] "Using CERT Volunteers," City of Los Angeles CERT.

[203] Adapted from City of Los Angeles CERT.

The LAFD effort should be applauded; it provides incredible information for other CERT departments. It does, however, beg the question: If whole-community preparedness is important enough to be a part of our national preparedness goal, why is FEMA not taking the lead?[204]

The LAFD structures CERT volunteers much in the same way it structures fire suppression support staff to maintain a chain of command within the organization: by way of battalions. Volunteer division coordinators and volunteer battalion coordinators are dedicated volunteers who provide a rank structure within the LAFD CERT program. The four division coordinators are responsible for three to four battalion coordinators, providing an incident command structure that is familiar to firefighters and easy for CERT volunteers to understand.[205] The division coordinators, who are higher in the rank structure than battalion coordinators, report to the CERT program manager. Gerlich reported that, "prior to the implementation of the [volunteer division coordinator] position, the 215 trained volunteers would converge upon the program manager with questions and concerns regarding their duties and responsibilities."[206] This incident command integration allows smooth coordination without over-burdening the program manager. The incident command system provides organizational structure to the CERT program, helping volunteers understand who to report to.

However, for the fire service to truly improve engagement with the community, the rank-and-file firefighters also need to have a place within the CERT structure. Firefighters must be motivated to serve within the CERT structure, appreciate the role of the volunteers, and be empowered to recommend new, creative ways to grow the program. Currently, firefighters are unlikely to take this step without compensation. There are ways, however, to motivate fire personnel to engage with CERT volunteers and provide positive seeds for future fire service engagement.

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[204] DHS, *National Preparedness Goal*.

[205] Gerlich, "LAFD CERT," 41.

[206] Gerlich, 41.

1. Using Hiring Processes to Integrate Firefighters into the CERT Program

Because volunteer assistance is beneficial throughout the fire service, firefighters need to be familiar with and structured into the CERT volunteer community. In order to accomplish increased CERT program participation, communities could provide incentives, or include mandates, that encourage or require pre-employment firefighter candidates to participate in CERT training and volunteer events before they are considered for fire department employment. Fire departments could also award CERT volunteers increased consideration if they apply for a fire service position, similar to current hiring preferences given to veterans. This would ensure that new recruits within the fire department are already familiar with and engaged in the CERT program, and would help create better integration between volunteers and employed fire department staff over time. CERT training is free in most communities; only 8.82 percent of departments surveyed (24 out of 272) charged for CERT training.[207] Cost is therefore unlikely to discourage potential firefighters from participating in CERT training prior to employment application. Emergency Medical Technician training and certifications for Firefighter I and II are generally considered requirements or significant benchmarks for fire service employment candidates; a commensurate CERT qualification, which would improve whole-community efforts, is a requirement that has been ignored in many jurisdictions.

CERT involvement in local fire stations should also be a requirement for potential firefighters. Community service is often something departments consider when assessing and interviewing potential recruits. Requiring applicants to volunteer with the CERT program ensures that all new members of the fire service are familiar with CERT practices and can appreciate the commitment of volunteer service. This may also add a level of enthusiasm for the volunteers, who would be working alongside and encouraging their own members to expand CERT training into a career path.

[207] "Using CERT Volunteers," City of Los Angeles CERT, accessed 2017, http://www.cert-la.com/cert-programs-information/using-cert-volunteers.

2. Engaging Retired Firefighters

Another way to increase involvement and integrate CERT in the local fire stations is to increase involvement among retiring firefighters. Firefighting is not just an occupation; it can be an identity. In an article for *Firehouse*, Dr. Richard Gasaway, a retired firefighter, wrote, "I was not able to perceive, understand or predict the massive feeling of loss I would encounter. I think this feeling of loss of identity, loss of routine, loss of purpose, loss of status and stature, and loss of respect is something that most first responders who climb down the ladder feel."[208] When he retired from the fire service, Gasaway explained, he missed the camaraderie, the leadership opportunities, and the social engagement—all of which had become a big part of his identity.

To harvest the knowledge of retired firefighters and increase volunteerism at the station level, cities could provide incentives to engage retirees in CERT programs. Departments, for instance, could offer a small additional percentage into retirement benefits if the retiree commits a certain number of volunteer hours to the CERT program, teaches classes, or fills a leadership role within the program at the station level. The use of retired members helps to maintain valuable response knowledge that can be imparted to volunteers, and provides good structure for CERT volunteer coordination. In order to receive benefits, however, the retired members would be responsible for demonstrating a positive role in the CERT program during their careers.

3. Light Duty/Limited Duty/Reasonable Accommodations

The LAFD may have pioneered the use of reasonable accommodations to structure its CERT program. Staffing a CERT program with firefighters who are injured and cannot return to regular duties, though it may be effective, also has drawbacks. This practice creates a limited pool of instructors who may not necessarily be motivated to teach and who may not meet the benchmarks identified in Chapters IV associated with competent

[208] Richard Gasaway, "Retirement: Climbing down the Career Ladder—Part 2," *Firehouse*, April 27, 2016, https://www.firehouse.com/careers-education/article/12199591/firefighter-education-rich-gasaway-advice-for-retiring-firefighters-fire-chiefs.

instructors.[209] Because CERT instructors become the face of the fire department, every effort should be made to ensure that instructors are suited for the work.

The OFD has used a similar model, utilizing injured firefighters to perform functions in public education. Light-duty firefighters assist with smoke detector installation, community education programs, school assemblies, NFPA Remembering When Fall and Fire Prevention Programs for older adults, and the Aspen and Alley Project.[210] While the assignments are generally short term (the firefighters return to regular duties once they heal), this model has given rank-and-file firefighters an appreciation for education. There is some difficult transitioning due to program continuity; however, the firefighters who promote these programs are well received by the public, and they take their experiences with them when they return to regular duties, becoming ambassadors for public education. They have increased knowledge of fire service public education programs and are best able and most willing to articulate fire safety messages when they return to suppression duties.

Care in utilizing firefighters in these roles was discussed in Chapter IV. Carrigan had some final conclusions on acceptable traits for fire service instructors. Using these basic assessments when evaluating potential CERT fire instructors would be a good starting point for fire service leaders. His deductions were made in consult from a 1950s book entitled *The Art of Teaching* and can be summarized as:

1. Know what you teach
2. Like what you teach
3. Like your students.[211]

Command staff should consider these points when selecting CERT program staff. Other research on volunteerism in the nonprofit and public sector indicates that "including staff

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[209] Carrigan, "Qualities of a Good Instructor."

[210] City of Omaha Fire Department; "Remembering When," National Fire Protection Association, accessed March 7, 2018, https://www.nfpa.org/public-education/resources/education-programs/remembering-when; "The Aspen and Alley Project," YouTube video, posted by KETV NewsWatch 7, December 14, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmQf598mVu0.

[211] Carrigan, "Qualities of a Good Instructor," 133–135.

in your planning enables your employees to explore the nuances of service and helps to prepare them to expand their reach through volunteers."[212] Creating the conditions for new employees to be involved in CERT programs, exposing injured employees that are skilled and meet criteria to work with volunteers, and instituting CERT into battalion-level activities should help accomplish a more rounded appreciation for CERT programs across the fire service.

4. FEMA Responsibilities

The federal government has funding available for CERT programs. As demonstrated in Chapter III, few jurisdictions take advantage of that resource, choosing to allocate funding dollars elsewhere. If the whole-community approach is truly at the core of preparedness, then FEMA needs to ensure that CERT programs and other opportunities to increase whole-community preparedness are taken seriously. Communities that receive money to train the public should be required by FEMA to train a minimum number of city, county, or state employees and their families annually. FEMA may consider decreasing the federal reimbursement for communities that choose to ignore their responsibilities to whole-community preparedness. Disasters such as fires, floods, and hurricanes are increasing exceeding 306 billion dollars in 2017. According to the National Oceanic and Atmiospheric Administration the costs have been significantly increasing over time as demonstrated in Figure 9.

[212] Rehnborg et al., *Strategic Volunteer Engagement*, 16.

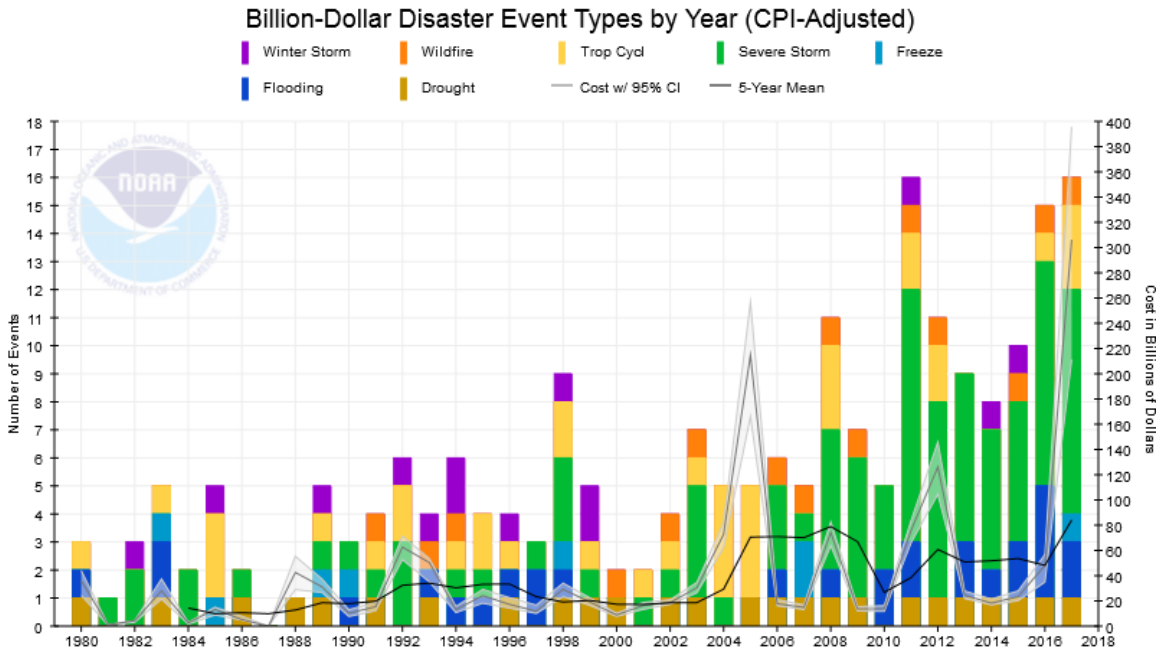

Figure 9. Dollars Spent on Disasters[213]

Cities take in thousands to millions of dollars in federal grant funds to prepare for threats, yet they have not created a productive CERT program to prepare their citizens and enhance their emergency capabilities, should funding decrease.

There is potential for other grant programs to support long term goals for CERT programs in the fire service. The Assistance to Firefighter Grant Program may be another opportunity through which FEMA could consider awarding funding for CERT activities. Priority would have to be allowed within the Notice of Funding Opportunity for CERT programs to be more easily funded and additional dollars needed. [214] Courses in fire prevention, community risk reduction, and CERT could be co-taught by the fire service with police and emergency management for communities that choose to make the commitment. The fire service, however, must take the lead. Funding and FEMA encouragement could make this a reality.

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[213] Source: "Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters: Time Series," National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, April 6, 2018, https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/billions/time-series.

[214] "The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) FY 2016 Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S)," FEMA, accessed March 7, 2018, https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1491839762365-4625e76b5d0d8862a135de230083c8f1/FY2016FPSNOFO.pdf.

Many other existing community grant programs could help leverage increasing CERT programs in the community as well. Urban Area Security Initiative and State Homeland Security are two such resources. It will be important for FEMA to exercise caution when applying a formula to administering these projects. The fire service is the mechanism for providing increased community engagement and disaster preparedness efforts; general federal funding for the fire service should not be decreased for other projects if additional funding is awarded for CERT activities. Funding models should not punish the fire service if it is willing to accept a greater role in protecting the community.

5. The Local Community

Communities across the United States obtain grant money from the federal government for a multitude of needs. Reasonable attempts should be made by all communities that accept federal funds to train civilian employees (non-police and fire) in CERT programs. Many jurisdictions are not as fortunate as the LAFD and have not had full CERT classes, or class wait lists.[215] Sending government employees builds a base of training in the community and may spur community interest in CERT involvement. Local governments that receive grant funding should have a plan in place for training employees in CERT. This will improve employees' ability to care for themselves in times of disaster and will position the city, county, and state employees as ambassadors for whole-community preparedness.

G. CONCLUSION

CERT coordinators across the country are noticing the gaps in CERT program development and are finding new ways to improve the programs. One project in particular, created by Christopher Williams of Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security, created a management device for CERT program managers. The program's Excel-based spreadsheets are designed to help departments that wish to create a new CERT program examine potential program costs (refer to the Supplemental for

[215] Gerlich, "LAFD CERT," 32.

information about how to retrieve a spreadsheet tool).[216] Future research to complement his cost and inventory tracking in the form of value assessment would be applicable to CERT development across the country.

The LAFD is able to track volunteers, including where and how they are contributing.[217] The OFD is similarly able to track the time it spends on other projects within the community. With some time and effort, a national program could be developed that applies fire service data collection models to volunteer management and better evaluates volunteer time committed in the name of emergency preparedness. A robust data collection mechanism that tallies volunteer time, costs associated with training, and return on investment from CERT volunteers would be an invaluable tool for any volunteer program.

The benefits of Omaha's CERT program were significant and unexpected. Although significant federal dollars were committed to training citizens for CERT, OFD made no specific investment and gained over 4,500 hours of volunteer assistance; percentage-wise, this rate of volunteerism was similar to LAFD's, which showed a $99,000 value. A good community engagement liaison could promote the CERT program and allow these volunteer numbers to remain stable annually, or even increase, resulting in more robust programs for the community and engagement opportunities for volunteers.

CERT programs may want to consider the evolution of volunteerism, as described in this thesis. Citizens volunteer less and less as part of social or religious groups. We can no longer expect that they will commit hundreds of hours of volunteer time, like they historically have. A new approach for volunteer commitment opportunities may be needed to engage episodic volunteers. Fire departments can champion that approach. Volunteers today may be older or have physical adaptive devices that prevent them from participating in emergency scene deployment, as witnessed in Omaha; however, these volunteers still provide a great service to the fire department. It is critical that the parameters for and

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[216] Christopher Williams, "The Cost of Whole Community Preparedness: Utilizing the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program" (research paper, Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security, 2017).

[217] Gerlich, "LAFD CERT," 49.

expectations of volunteers—as well as volunteer programs— are clearly defined at the local level.

FEMA should also find ways to assure that CERT program funding reflects the national emphasis given to the program doctrine. At the national level, there are several opportunities to enforce the importance of a whole-community approach. A robust CERT program is just one example of the potential use for grant funding; FEMA can encourage (or require) grant funding to go toward increased volunteer training by decreasing funds for departments that do not comply. This may sway communities to consider the seriousness of community engagement. A true reassessment of the CERT curriculum is also needed. If local responders can determine and report the actual use of community volunteers for emergency preparedness, FEMA can develop an amended curriculum that is shorter and reflects the actual work expectations and outcomes for citizen volunteers.

SUPPLEMENTAL

Christopher Williams of Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security created a management device for CERT program managers. The program's Excel-based spreadsheets are designed to help departments that wish to create a new CERT program examine potential program costs.[218] The Excel spreadsheets have been provided as a supplemental file to this thesis and are catalogued with this thesis. A copy can also be obtained by contacting the Naval Postgraduate School's Dudley Knox Library, located at 1 University Circle, Monterey, CA 93943.

[218] Williams, "The Cost of Whole Community Preparedness."

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