

Community Preparedness Webinar Series Webinar: Implementing a Youth Preparedness Program in Your Organization

Good Afternoon, everyone! Welcome to the Community Preparedness Webinar Series.

Thank you so much for participating in today's webinar. Here at FEMA, we have been placing heavy emphasis on youth preparedness. Perhaps the strongest components to a robust youth preparedness strategy are school-based and community-based programs.

My name is Regina Moran, and I am the Youth Preparedness Director here at FEMA. Today, I will be giving a presentation covering the steps that need to be taken when you start a youth preparedness program in your organization.

In great partnership with the American Red Cross and the U.S. Department of Education, we have been traveling across the country delivering an albeit-longer version of the training you will be receiving today. I strongly encourage you to regularly check in with us and look for a workshop coming to a location near you soon.

Of course, it's impossible for us to engage every person who may be interested in starting a youth program at the workshops, so we wanted to offer a condensed version of the content.

I want to put heavy emphasis on the fact that what we're covering is VERY condensed. The workshops are typically six hours and the audience benefits from hearing from subject matter experts who have already experienced considerable success with their youth preparedness program.

To assist us today with getting you as much information and as many told as possible, I've included a few documents for you. You'll see on the left-hand side a draft of the how-to guide. Our webinar today will be skimming the surface of what the guide really delves into. Please use this guide and tell us what you think and how we can improve it as we try to finalize the document.

I've also included a catalogue of youth preparedness programs who have registered with us. Since there isn't enough time today to have these amazing program representatives share their insight, I'd strongly recommend reaching out to those highlighted in the catalogue. Also, as you build your own program, please allow us to add you to the catalogue which has proven to be a way for youth preparedness programs to network with each other.

Ok, let's get started!

The webinar will work off of an agenda that covers five modules. You'll notice if you're following along in the how-to guide that it also covers these same five major topics.

- First, getting started and engaging partners
- Second, identifying a curriculum that works for you
- Third, implementing a program
- Fourth, promoting your program, and
- Fifth, evaluating and sustaining your program

The first step to starting a youth program is to determine what risks directly concern your community. Is it wildfires? Blizzards? Floods? Maybe a man-made disaster? You need to consider your community's needs and their resources.

I'm going to move the slide to a handy dandy checklist we have in the how-to guide. I find this tool to be particularly helpful as we move to our next step which is to establish goals for your program.

This first checklist found on page 10 of the how-to guide covers what we just went over – risks. When completing this section, don't be afraid of getting specific. Some of the best programs are customized so much that the community not only feels directly applied to the content, but a sense of ownership begins to foster.

What I like about this list is also the last few questions. Do any current programs address these risks already? And can they be potential partners?

Engagement is so, so critical when you are at the development stage of your program. Truth be told, it's pretty critical at every stage, but a collective partnership at the beginning of development is very appreciated by partners who will help you achieve your goals.

Which is a good segue into determining your mission, vision, and overall goals. When you determine your mission, think about the direct benefits that will come from its presence. The vision should be more macroscopic. What will the long-term impact be? Is your community and the families (not just children) that comprise its existence more resilient because of your program? We know that youth programming empowers children, but a great long-term goal is to have those children ignite preparedness behavior changes in their families and neighborhoods.

And of course, we need to start talking about what kind of financial and non-financial resources you'll need to get this program started. The first year of a program rarely has a budget and that's also true for some of the most refined programs you'll see listed in the youth preparedness catalogue.

You should consider volunteer help at your disposal. There may be organizations and programs that will benefit from your program that can help you with the man power you may be lacking. Probably the best resource at your disposal is the network of programs that have already created programs and are willing to share hand-outs, content, and a plethora of advice. Also, consider using the results they've achieved to strengthen any grant proposals you may write for. Remember that you're selling not just your program, but also

youth preparedness in general. Please also don't forget your government partners. They may help as trainers, could also help guide content, and couple possible partner financially. The Citizen Corps Council in your community should know about your program from the beginning. They can definitely help.

We talked about engagement already, but I wanted to make sure we lead you in the right direction so that you can get as much support as possible. Engagement is an interesting term, isn't it? People think of it in many different ways. Once you secure their interest, identify their level of commitment, you should put 'em to work! Giving partners a role and respective responsibilities builds a sense of ownership. They can help building more interest, leveraging their own partnerships (maybe with school systems and principals) to help get buy in, and enhance content.

Here is a chart of potential partners. If you're following along with the how-to guide, this chart starts on page 15. I hope you find these checklists helpful.

Now that we've got the program started and we have partners interested in helping us, it will behoove us to identify a curriculum – or various components of a curriculum that best aid us in achieving the goals set.

When you think about delivery, what age group do you see for your audience? There are pluses and minuses to any group. Elementary school-aged audiences are easy to excite and they are more prone to communicate that excitement to their parents and guardians. Meanwhile, middle school students can engage in meaningful and content-driven training. But, they aren't going to be quite as excited as a second grader. Anyone who works with middle-schoolers knows that moodiness can be an issue. Man, I wish this webinar had a laugh track! Teens have already developed behavioral habits, but some programs geared toward them are rich and very valuable.

Going back to the risks you've already listed out, consider having classes, modules, or short presentations that directly address those risks. Children will respond well to specific steps and processes. Rely on the research that already exists that study youth behavior, such as the Youth to the Forefront Literature review which you have in your file share pot on the left-hand side. Think about stop, drop, and roll. That campaign built on the specificity that kids respond to. There is also considerable research out there that suggests that kids feel real anxiety about emergencies and disasters. The content you include will alleviate that anxiety.

You also need to determine who is best to deliver the curriculum. Is it a teacher? I'd suggest leveraging your First Responder partnerships you've already made. You may find that school resource officers – a cadre found in most city police departments – or fire houses are eager to engage in community programs. Maybe they'll want to deliver the program.

When using existing materials or developing supplemental materials and exercises, design them to be accessible to everyone, including youth and adults with access and functional

needs. For more information on providing access to individuals with disabilities, and for general information on accessibility guidelines, please refer to the following links:

- Section 504 Programs and Activities Accessibility Handbook: http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/dro/504/504_handbook.pdf
- For guidance on creating Section 508 compliant online materials, refer to the Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards: <http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/standards.htm>
- For further information on emergency management and compliance with the Americans with Disability Act, review the Citizen Corps Community Preparedness Webinar, a product of the Community Preparedness Webinar series: <http://www.citizencorps.gov/news/webcasts.shtm>

There really is no reason to reinvent the wheel, but adapting a program so that it best fits your program is important. Here are some hard and fast rules so that you tweak it without losing some of the fundamental learning needs of youth.

- Ensure your materials are audience appropriate
- Avoid using scare tactics or negative messaging.
- Do use positive messaging that empowers children to act during an emergency and creates a team mentality.
- Adapt the length of the session so that it is compatible with the attention span of your audience. If your program is school-based, ensure each session fits within a typical class period.
- Align the curriculum with state standards of learning if your program is school-based.
- Work with educators or your state's department of education to see how your curriculum can support standards. Some programs are already aligned with state standards.
- Keep children engaged by incorporating a variety of activities, including opportunities for hands-on participation into your curriculum.
- For school-based programs, create a scalable curriculum so there can be some flexibility to work within teacher schedules and the school day and calendar. For example, break up lengthy modules and offer multiple sessions.
- Consider what you would include in a train-the-trainer session and incorporate that into your timeline.

When you finishing adapting it, ask yourself these questions before organizing your first class:

- Are your materials audience appropriate?
- Is the messaging positive, empowering children to act during an emergency?
- Is the length of each session appropriate for your audience?
- If school-based, does the length of each session fit within a typical class period?

- If school-based, does your curriculum align with state standards of learning?
- Are there a variety of activities that engage children?

I know that we talked a bit about format already, but this wouldn't be a good representation of youth preparedness programs without mentioning a few of the great programs that are already out there.

- There are in-school time programs like STEP that is predominant in the northeast region of the country, which time-wise can be adjusted to the needs and availability of the school
- There are also school-based programs like Commander Ready, which is in the DC public elementary schools, that provide considerable training and teaching time to its students
- After school programs are always looking for educational programs and several are listed in the list catalogue in your file share bank on the left hand side of your screen
- Community-based programs that have homes at non-profits have also been alternative to school-time programs
- Also, consider tying your program to larger national programs like Masters of Disasters, Teen CERT, or Learn & Serve. This links you immediately to both a support network and perhaps even resources
- I should also mention that there are disaster patch programs with the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Tying to your local troop or encouraging the adoption of a disaster patch would be a cool idea. In fact, if I have any girl scout representatives on the line, there is a webinar coming up toward the end of the year specifically toward you that will highlight some of the patches ready for the taking
- And last, web-based programs are an awesome way to include interactive games and have well-known characters like the Sesame Street Friends present the material

Ok, let's switch gears. I know that the webinar format is tough for interaction, but I think some activity is in order. I'd like for you to imagine that you have a program. You've engaged your partners. You've decided on the content. All of your ducks are in a row.

Now, you need to get your schools, your parents, and your students. There are so many stakeholders in any program involving youth and they each have their own concerns and worries. I'd love to tell you that once you get one token of support, you're done. But alas, that's not the case at all.

To that end, I'd like you to have in your mind that hypothetical program. It's awesome. It addresses the risks of your town. You can envision little kids cheering for their instructor and running home to make a plan with their parents. It's the dream!

Now, let me stop you right there. Selling this program happens before all the cheering and beautiful family preparedness bonding time!

Imagine writing a letter to a parent, a teacher, and to the principal of one of the schools. How about a business partner in the private sector or even the superintendent of a large school district? What are their concerns? How can you get them to share your dream? You need to think about this before you step foot in that class.

Our next virtual activity... or maybe I should call it collective dream time... will be the one that, if I could hear y'all, I'm sure would elicit groaning. Think about your budget. Now think of a 5-year budget. When you get to this point, it helps to establish as many potential work-arounds as possible. Your partners should help you, too. Strategic planning and budgeting is a science... heck, it's an industry. But know where your program is going and how it may grow could potentially be the difference between sink or swim.

When we have the in-person workshops, my favorite activity is this one. Think about that first day of your program. And now I'm going to go straight Murphy's Law on you and tell you to write out every possible thing that can go wrong- small to big. I'm not kidding! The first class I ever put on, I showed up and the doors to the school were pad locked. So we held class outside. One time, the firemen delivering the program had to leave for a fire. So yeah... I was gonna have to step in there and cover.

Flexibility is so important when you are implementing a youth program.

Our next section is on promoting your program. This is always an interesting section to deliver to practitioners like yourselves because I honestly feel like it's against your collective nature to brag.

But promoting your program is so important to garner interest, build community support, and create a profile that will lead to your program's growth.

You have to think about who your promotional strategy is going to hit. More importantly, who do you WANT it to hit? Do you need community backing? Do you need private sector dollars?

Once you determine that, push your message through outlets that make sense for that audience. Keep in mind that several outlets, like social media, word of mouth, and even blogging through local papers is effective... and FREE.

Promotion is a section in which those partnerships you made many slides ago will come in clutch. Let them help you push the praise you've earned. Also, don't forget that an invitation goes a long way. Invite the press, community members, whoever to see for themselves the great learning that's a result of your program. Be sure to use projects that the kids make to help you. Who is gonna turn their head away from a cute kid holding a family evacuation plan?

The best thing you can do for your program in terms of promotion is to root it in data that shows its value.

Evaluation provides your stakeholders an opportunity to be heard, includes your program into overall youth preparedness research, and most importantly assist you in refining your program.

Indeed, the data you collect will paint a picture to your boss, funders, the field, and everyone else! Also, it will identify your gaps.

When evaluating, the important thing you can ask yourself is what do you need to know? What are you unsure of? Are these the best trainers? Are the kids responding to the content? Has there been any behavior change? Are the principals satisfied? How about parents?

The goals should be SMART, which stand for specific, measurable, appropriate, realistic, and time-framed. Those questions I just posed can be framed within the SMART parameters.

You have types of evaluation at your service and a robust evaluation plan will include each.

- Process evaluation is on-going
- Formative takes a look at the building blocks of your program's creation
- Outcome and impact examine if you're achieving your mission and vision, respectively

If you're following along, there's an awesome chart that starts on page 32 that delves into this.

Reaching out to a sample that represents each type of stakeholder is best. It doesn't have to be everybody, but everybody should be represented. A sample of students, principals, family members, community members, and the like...

The type of assessment tool should change based on the stakeholder. In the students, we're looking for knowledge growth and behavior change. In the parents, we're looking for family behavior change. In the teacher and principal evaluations, we're looking for satisfaction.

Like, are you going to have us back next year?

And of course, qualitative and quantitative data paint a different but equally important picture. If done well and continuously, your program will grow, expand, and get the support needed for sustainability. It will also refine your program to its maximum effectiveness.

Let's talk about immediate steps.

1. Please look at the how-to guide. It goes much deeper than I had time for. Let me know your thoughts on it.
2. As you start this process, know that you already have a partner. FEMA is here for you and we're ready to connect you to the assistance you need.
3. In the most immediate, please sign up to be a coalition member for National Preparedness Month. This month showcases all of the amazing work we do as a larger community preparedness team. We need to promote the incredible stuff that youth-led and youth-serving organizations are doing around preparedness. You'll also be immediately connected to this team. There are so many tools available to you as a coalition member.

Thanks so much. Here is my contact information. Please don't hesitate to reach out. Thank you for joining this webinar.