



Disaster and Fire Safety Commission

21a

ACTION CALENDAR

October 2, 2012

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Disaster and Fire Safety Commission
Submitted by: Lynn Zummo, Chairperson, Disaster and Fire Safety Commission
Subject: Recommendations for Disaster Preparation for Vulnerable and Underserved Populations

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution directing the City Manager to commit, out of Measure GG funds, a total of \$300,983 to fund the following recommended personnel and services:

1. Fund a position in the Public Health Division dedicated solely to disaster preparedness in the vulnerable and underserved populations of the City, with emphasis on South and West Berkeley.
2. Fund a position in the Office of Emergency Services (OES) to report to and assist the CERT Program Manager in developing workable options to increase disaster preparedness for the target populations and implement them.
3. Dedicate and set aside a specific amount that would cover the costs of additional emergency preparedness classes, both those already in existence and those that may be developed under Recommendation Two.

SUMMARY

On March 20, 2012, City Council referred a request that the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission collaborate with staff to develop a budget to bring emergency preparedness resources to presently underserved areas of Berkeley and to other populations that would be vulnerable during a disaster, particularly the disabled and the elderly.

On August 1, 2012, the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission took action to send the following recommendation to Council. Motion: Mitchell, Second: Sorgen Ayes: 9 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0.

That the City Council adopt a Resolution to fund the following three actions:

1. Fund a position in the Public Health Division dedicated solely to disaster preparedness in the vulnerable and underserved populations of the City, with emphasis on South and West Berkeley. This staff person would:
 - Engage and train community leaders so that they can motivate, organize, train and help the members of their communities become disaster prepared.
 - Identify or develop disaster preparation materials to disseminate in all programs provided by the Public Health Division.
 - Work with organizations serving specific portions of the targeted populations to help their clients become disaster prepared.
 - Coordinate and collaborate with OES, BFD, appropriate Commissions and City Departments, and other organizations/entities in the City involved in disaster preparation as an ongoing priority.
2. Fund a position in the Office of Emergency Services to report to and assist the CERT Program Manager in developing workable options to increase disaster preparedness for the target populations and implement them: This staff person, along with the Manager, would:
 - Develop condensed versions of emergency preparation classes that could be delivered "on site" in neighborhoods and for organizations and their clients.
 - Establish "Train the Trainer" classes for community and organizational leaders so that they can train their neighbors, members and clients.
 - Identify and/or oversee development of additional, relevant video and multimedia options for providing disaster preparedness information and training.
 - Coordinate with City Planning, Building Safety and the Rent Board to improve notification of soft story building residents re: the dangers inherent in a disaster, and improve seismic retrofitting of their buildings by landlords.
 - Explore and obtain means of providing cache type disaster prep supplies, through corporations and other donors, for residents who do not have access to such supplies and where regular caches would not be workable, i.e. apartment buildings.
 - Coordinate and collaborate with Public Health, Mental Health, Parks and Rec, other City Departments, appropriate City Commissions and all organizations

and community groups/neighborhoods committed to, or capable of, developing disaster preparation components.

3. Dedicate and set aside a specific amount that would cover the costs of additional emergency preparedness classes, both those already in existence and those that may be developed under Recommendation Two.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Fiscal impact of the recommendation totals \$300,983 of Measure GG funding to fund the following personnel and services. (Personnel costs include salary, and fringe benefits).

Recommendation One: Fund a Senior Community Health Specialist in the Public Health Division for an estimated total of \$107,371

Recommendation Two: Fund a Community Services Specialist -I in OES for an estimated total of \$123,612

Recommendation Three: Establish a set-aside fund for emergency/CERT classes and materials \$70,000

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Although Berkeley, with its CERT and Cache programs is among the most disaster ready of cities, it has long been known that a significant portion of its residents remain un-prepared to respond to a significant disaster. That status is particularly true for residents who are underserved or are particularly vulnerable. It is one thing to provide training and resources (the caches) to motivated people with at least a reasonable amount of resources and the ability to commit time and energy to becoming prepared. It is quite another matter, and much more of a challenge, to create approaches and systems that reach residents who do not fall in that category. The Council, out of its concerns for these groups and their need for assistance in becoming prepared, has requested that the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission (DFSC) present recommendations for effective ways for providing the services needed.

The two groups have different, though often overlapping, needs in becoming prepared; for the purposes of these recommendations they are being defined as follows:

Vulnerable populations are residents that need assistance, beyond what neighborhoods could offer, in order to prepare, respond and be cared for at the time of a major disaster because, in addition to the issues all residents would encounter, they have additional vulnerabilities. These include, but are not limited to:

- Young children, families with young children, latchkey kids.

- Disabled residents, with mobility, cognitive, sight and hearing issues.
- Residents of hospitals, nursing homes and other care facilities.
- Medically fragile, frail seniors and others, and those who are homebound, isolated and not part of a community.
- Residents of soft story buildings.
- Homeless residents or those minimally housed, i.e. in Single Room Occupancies or couch surfing.

Underserved populations are residents capable of organizing and preparing, who are perhaps motivated to do so. They are underserved because they need support and help beyond what the City now offers in order to organize, be trained and obtain the resources needed to become prepared. These groups include, but are not limited to:

- Renters, because they must partly depend on landlords/building managers for cache storage space and other issues, and are more transient.
- Renters in soft story buildings, with little leverage to get landlords to upgrade their buildings.
- Culturally isolated or non/low English speaking residents.
- Low/fixed income residents, with a variety of challenges, with little disposable income to spend on disaster supplies, a lack of transportation or child care to participate in meetings and trainings.

In light of the characteristics of the two populations described above, different means of assisting them in becoming prepared are required, all needing additional staffing and resources, and the use of different approaches, in order to do so. The principles guiding such help include:

- Forging connections with community groups and established organizations serving the targeted groups such as schools, child care centers, BOCA and specific faith-based congregations, recreation and senior centers, cultural centers, the Community Assistance Team, and informal, established neighborhood groups.
- Working with City departments such as Public Health, Mental Health, Parks and Recreation with presence in and service to the targeted populations, as well as with non-profits who serve specific groups within these populations, to develop disaster prep programs appropriate to their clients and memberships.

- Taking emergency prep training and preparation activities, including the CERT mobile, to the residents, in their communities, rather than ask them to come to the City training facility.
- Developing materials and training sessions relevant to the specific needs of resident groups (such as language, culture, age, etc.), in smaller and more easily assimilated "bites".
- Increasing use of multimedia as a means of reaching more people, especially those who are not able or willing to participate in person.
- Finding means to provide needed materials to promote the above efforts through corporate and individual donations and other funding.

BACKGROUND

Measure GG was passed by voters to ensure funding for several measures, one of which was disaster preparedness. The demands of the other three: ensuring all fire stations remain open at all times, and the initial cost of radio interoperability and having paramedics on all fire trucks have required the majority of funding in these first few years. While the Cache Program has been funded by Measure GG, major expenses for much needed additional disaster preparedness activities has not been available. With initial costs now determined on two of the projects, future planning for use of Measure GG funds can now be revisited and significant funding for disaster preparedness projects established. The Council, with its particular concerns about these vulnerable and underserved City residents, initiated the request that the DFSC present recommendations for the projects/activities that could better serve them.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Engaging residents with a variety of different, urgent needs that require constant attention requires developing ongoing relationships that people can depend upon. Many of the targeted residents have become isolated, are ignored, have been, or feel they have been, frequently let down by government and others, and lack trust in any assistance that is offered - or have given up hope. Coupled with the individual barriers they may have to becoming disaster prepared, doing so is not a priority. Unless the City can provide stable, sufficient staffing to develop the services these groups need, ultimately involving other organizations in doing so as well, the goal of these recommendations cannot be met. Current City OES, BFD and Public Health staff is doing all that it can - and then some - to provide presently offered services, and adding where they can. They cannot also take on the kind of services needed to serve the populations about which everyone is concerned, and cannot be expected to do so. If the City is serious about helping these populations, it must commit resources for that purpose. Measure GG was intended to do so, given the constriction of government budgets that exist now and probably into the future; now is the time to use it.

Rationale for the specific recommendations is as follows:

Public Health is the City department with access through its services to a wide range of members of the targeted populations. It also has the most expertise and experience in community organization, a skill needed to undertake the activities envisioned in this proposal. It is presently undertaking disaster prep activities with 70% FTE staffing, including prep for major health disasters as well as natural disasters like earthquakes. It would be in a position to provide significant progress towards the City's goal with an additional full time employee.

OES is operating effectively in offering its present services. It cannot take on additional responsibilities with present staffing, and in hiring someone new, could put specifics relating to program goals into the job description and desired experience of the person hired.

The third recommendation requires a set-aside to fund additional emergency prep classes, both existing CERT classes and new and innovative classes and training materials. CERT classes fill up quickly, and engender citizen frustration when they cannot get into their desired classes. OES needs to be in a position to add classes as necessary and develop new ways, and resources for, presenting the material.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

There are no alternative actions being considered. These recommendations need to be funded in order to establish needed services and develop other ways of maintaining and delivering them in the future. Unless significant resources are, at least initially, committed to the goal of serving vulnerable and underserved Berkeley residents, little will be able to be developed to do so.

CITY MANAGER

See companion report.

CONTACT PERSON

Khin Chin, Associate Management Analyst, Fire Department, 510-981-5506

Gil Dong, Deputy Fire Chief, Fire Department, 510-981-5501

Lynn Zummo, Chairperson

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

ADDITIONAL MEASURE GG EXPENDITURES FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

WHEREAS, the vulnerable and underserved populations in Berkeley have not been provided adequate assistance in becoming prepared to respond to a disaster; and

WHEREAS, additional funds are becoming available through Measure GG since major, one time expenditures for other GG priorities have now been determined; and

WHEREAS, the City Council intends to improve, increase and jump start disaster preparedness services to vulnerable and underserved populations.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager is directed to commit, out of Measure GG funds, a total of \$300,983 to fund the following recommended personnel and services.(Personnel costs include salary and fringe benefits).

Section 1: Fund a Senior Community Health Specialist in the Public Health Division for a total of \$107,371.

Section 2: Fund a Community Services Specialist 1 in OES for a total of \$123,612.

Section 3: Establish a set-aside fund for emergency/CERT classes and materials: \$70,000.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a full evaluation of the outcome of the proposed activities and services be determined at the end of each fiscal year and recommendations for disaster preparedness activities and Measure GG funding for the subsequent year be based on both the evaluation and an assessment of further identified needs.

