Emergency Management Equity Working Group Meeting

Meeting Kick-off: Monday, April 22nd, 2023, 1:00PM

12 members attended in person, online, or sent a proxy. The members in attendance include Jeremy Bennett, Alexa Boggs, Karen Brimm, Justin Haga, Megan Hall, Jacob Hughes, Kimberly Ligon, Donna Pletch, Steve Nelson, Darshan Parikh, Lauren Roche, Ahoo Salem.

A member of the public, Anna Mahan, was also in attendance alongside the OCI team and EMEWG Chair, Shawn Talmadge.

Introductions 1:00 PM

Present members of the working group introduced themselves, their background, and their respective agencies.

EMEWG Chair Shawn Talmadge's Opening Remarks

New cycle began with opening remarks from Shawn Talmadge and introductions were made by all members of the working group.

Two presentations were given by the Office of Community Impact, which included an overview of the Working Group Charter, Remote Policy, and FOIA requirements -which guide the structure of working group meetings and votes.

- Members will receive digital copies of the Charter and Remote Policy to review. Suggestions and a vote to ratify the Charter and Remote Policy will occur at the next Working Group meeting on July 22nd

Strategic Goals and Objectives

Two proposed goals for the working group were developed:

- Collaborate with other groups within the inclusive emergency management sphere and advise leadership on emerging trends. This can be accomplished through presentations to the group. Presentations will be roughly 15 minutes.

- Produce one report or memo each cycle on an inclusive emergency management theme of the State Coordinator's choosing.
  - The topic of the report will be jointly decided by Chair and the members of the EMEWG.
  - Suggestions put forward by members were:
    - The importance of dedicated emergency managers for each locality (with discussions on the fiscal impacts and providing service providers support)
    - Best practices, not only in relation to AFN but embedding cultural competency at each level of emergency management (04/18 "Emergency Preparedness for Organizations Serving People with Disabilities and Older Adults" webinar from the ACL and FEMA ODIC Disaster Webinar Series).
      - The suggestion of using 2 or 3 external stakeholder groups to engage specific communities and promote the message.
      - The importance of building trust and relationships during blue skies was focused on to make these connections possible.
    - The need to operationalize equity and map out points of inequity was also mentioned. A resource from FEMA named Shortening the Disaster Cycle for Everyone lists the 14 Potential Points of Inequity in the Disaster Cycle (Shortening the Disaster Cycle for Everyone (fema.gov))
    - Members will continue to suggest potential goals and objectives to OCI. The final goals and objectives for the FY '24 cycle will be voted on by members at the next meeting.

Ready Virginian Tool Updates

Ready Virginian Tool Updates were shared with the members. It was decided that the tool will be created by a developer who works as a contractor for VDEM and will follow an AI chat format for accessibility and ease of users. Members were asked to review and provide feedback on accessibility of use, resources, and appropriate language and phrasing. The tool, through non-collected, non- personally identifiable information (PII), will show users the top three hazards in their area and recommend preparedness and recovery materials from VDEM and trusted sources (such as FEMA and the Red Cross). Materials sourced from other websites will credit the original site but will be housed on a VDEM drive to prevent broken links.

Members asked questions on how the tool would gather local resources and update links. They were interested in inviting the VDEM contractor to speak on the scraping tool which will perform the function of gathering resources from localities' websites. OCI will connect with the contractor to schedule a presentation at the next meeting.

Members made suggestions such as:

- Working with State Libraries to do outreach of the tool
- Connect with 2-1-1 and No Wrong Door
  - Discussion on how to partner with 2-1-1 instead of replicating their efforts. There is a lot of overlap which gives opportunities for collaboration.

- Food Banks which serve different vulnerable areas.
- School divisions, water, electric company can add a sheet of paper to inform.

Members stressed that what the tool collects and how information is collected have equal importance.

- Rather than focus questions on what types of disabilities users have, questions should be focused on what types of accommodations users need during an event

Members also stressed the need to utilize people in "plain sight"- distribution lists, contact lists, listservs, disability services shared by sister agencies and external stakeholders to amplify the message and use of the tool.

- DMAS has the ability to connect with people who are homebound

Closing Remarks 3:07PM

The Chair Shawn Talmadge gave closing remarks. The next meeting will be on July 22, 2024 at the Meadowdale Public Library from 1 – 3p.