

SNAPSHOT OF CALIFORNIA'S EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS EFFORTS FOR CULTURALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

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Purpose

- To conduct a review of California's current state, local and community preparedness programs and efforts to identify:
 - ▣ Barriers and challenges to reaching racially and ethnically diverse communities;
 - ▣ Programmatic and policy gaps and priorities for integrating these communities into preparedness planning and implementation; and
 - ▣ Successes, promising efforts and lessons learned.

Background (continued)

- California's culturally diverse population:
 - Over 40% non-white
 - 1 in 3 is Hispanic/Latino
 - 1 in 3 is foreign born
 - 43% speak a language other than English
 - 1 in 5 (~6.8 million) speaks English less than very well
 - Estimated 2.4 million undocumented immigrants

Background (continued)

“...it’s not a matter of **if** a disaster will strike, but **when**...”

~*Maria Shriver, First Lady of California*

- California has a long history of coping with disasters, with nearly 5,000 wildfires, several major earthquakes (greater than magnitude 4.0) and numerous other natural disasters each year.
- Not everyone is affected equally, and often racially and ethnically diverse communities are hit the hardest.
- This is particularly true for California, a state rich in racial, ethnic and language diversity.
- Over the decades, and particularly in the wake of the Loma Prieta earthquake and other events, greater attention has been given to preparedness, response and recovery for California’s diverse populations.

Methodology

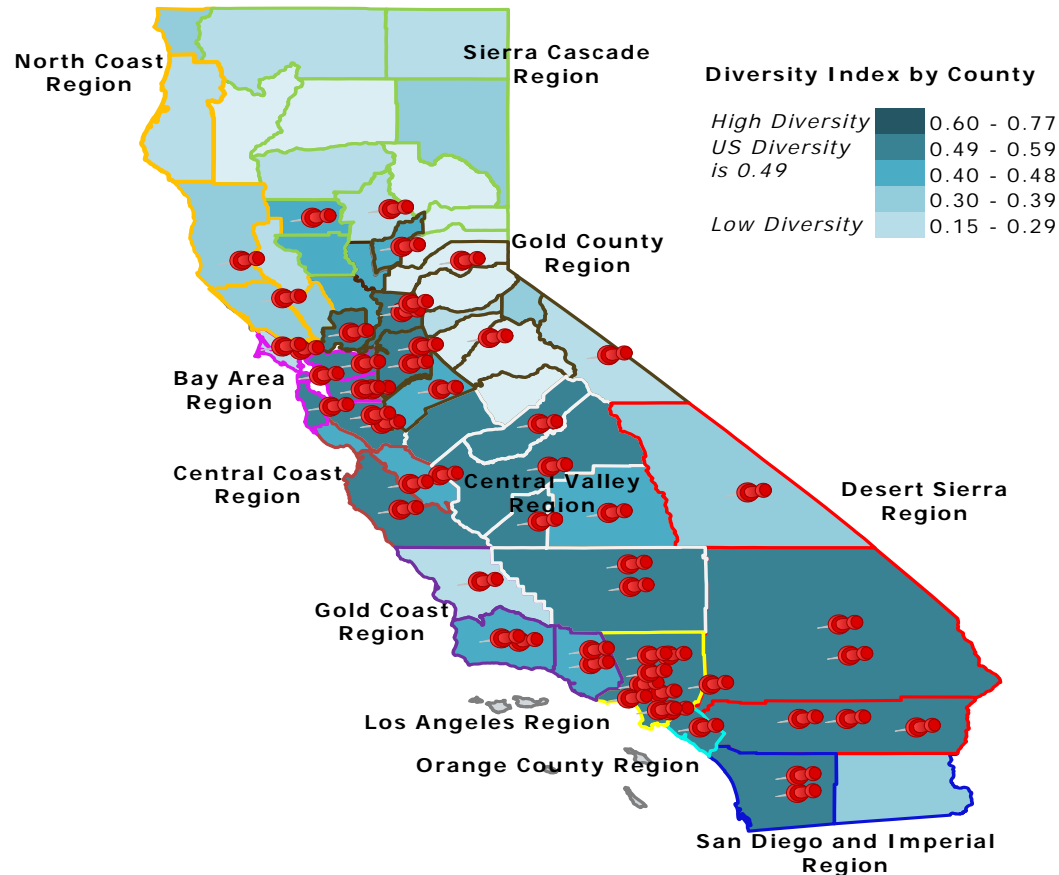
- Three-pronged approach:
 - ▣ Conducted a review of 148 websites originating from state, local and community public and private sector organizations across California and focusing on preparedness and public health issues;
 - ▣ Conducted a review of disaster and public health literature focusing on emergency preparedness for racially and ethnically diverse communities in California;
 - ▣ Conducted 13 key informant interviews with individuals representing a range of regions, sectors and priorities.

Findings: Web-based Review

- Of the 148 organizational websites profiled...
 - ▣ 72% provide links to translated materials
 - ▣ 42% provide translated materials directly on their site
 - ▣ 14% offer courses and trainings for service providers focused on cultural competence, language issues and topics related to reaching diverse communities
 - ▣ 12% explicitly indicate actively collaborating with other agencies
 - ▣ 5% indicate involvement in research and evaluation activities; offer guidance on promising strategies and practices; and indicate involvement in advocacy or policy work

Findings: Web-based Review (continued)

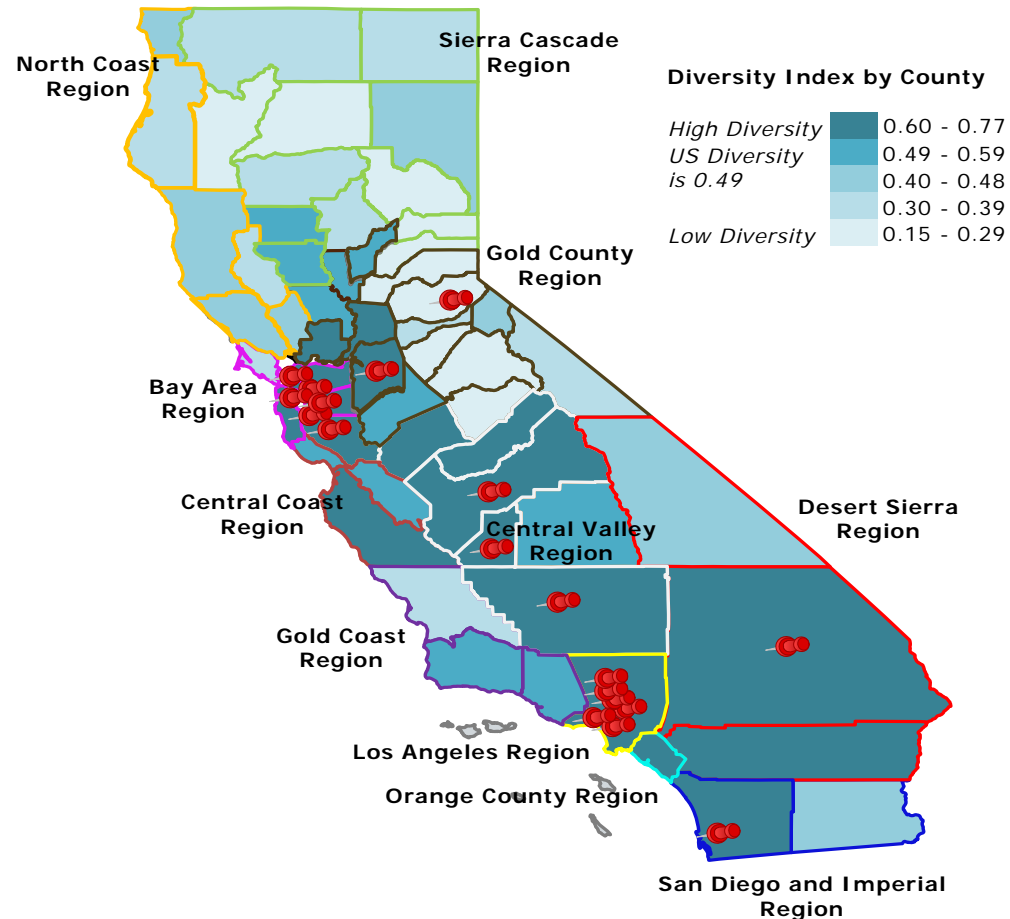
- Where are the local agencies that provide translated resources located across California?



Data Source for Diversity: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

Findings: Web-based Review (continued)

- Where are the local agencies that provide training and education programs on diversity preparedness located across California?



Findings: Literature Review

□ **Individual/Community Level Barriers:**

- ***Low socioeconomic status:*** limited financial resources; substandard housing; low literacy; and limited transportation.
- ***Culture and language:*** limited English proficiency; little familiarity with U.S. culture, customs and programs; and information received from non-mainstream sources.
- ***Trust and perceived fairness of government response:*** low trust in warning messages and service providers; less likely to believe that government will respond fairly to needs.

Findings: Literature Review (continued)

- **Institutional/Organizational Level Barriers:**
 - ***Limited knowledge*** about diverse communities and their distinct needs;
 - ***Limited infrastructure support*** to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services (e.g., workforce diversity, availability of on-site bilingual interpreters, and cultural competence training for service providers); and
 - ***Limited funding, resources and collaboration.***

Findings: Key Informant (KI) Interviews

- Who were the key informants?
 - 3 county public health departments
 - 2 local emergency management & response agencies
 - 4 private sector philanthropic and advocacy groups
 - 2 community-based organizations
 - 2 state agencies

- Key informants represented 4 different regions, including Central Coast, Bay Area, Central Valley, and Los Angeles, as well as the state of California.

Findings: KI Interviews (continued)

- Identified challenges and barriers to reaching California's diverse communities in emergencies:
 - ***Individual-level barriers:***
 - Economic and social stressors within communities
 - Limited trust
 - Culture and language
 - Geographic Isolation
 - ***Institutional/Organizational-level barriers:***
 - Lack of funding and flexibility in funding for culturally and linguistically appropriate services
 - Limited collaboration for these efforts

Findings: KI Interviews (continued)

- Examples of strategies and practices adopted by key informants and their organizations:
 - ▣ **Community Engagement:** establishing planning committees and advisory groups; and building informal partnerships.
 - ▣ **Infrastructure support for culturally and linguistically appropriate services:** recruiting bilingual and racial/ethnic staff; and establishing policies to encourage use of professional interpreters.
 - ▣ **Community needs assessments and surveys:** identifying the distinct and specific needs of culturally diverse communities as well as community resources and assets and current programs.
 - ▣ **Establishing collaborations:** partnering to share resources, information and services.

Findings: KI Interviews (continued)

- Recommendations on coordinating activities across agencies and sectors:
 - ▣ ***Establishing mandatory steering committees*** with community representatives within CA's Office of Emergency Services and other emergency management and response agencies.
 - ▣ ***Reaching out to ethnic media.***
 - ▣ ***Working with neighborhood councils*** to provide basic preparedness information.
 - ▣ ***Working with schools*** to disseminate basic preparedness information.

Findings: KI Interviews (continued)

- Recommendations for policy changes:
 - ▣ ***Encouraging collaboration across organizations:*** encouraging jointly-funded projects; financial incentives for active collaboration (e.g., subsidizing travel); building cordial and personal relationships across sectors.
 - ▣ ***Increasing programmatic flexibility for local agencies:*** providing opportunities for local agencies to innovate and tailor plans to communities' distinct and specific needs.
 - ▣ ***Increasing funding for programs, resources and services:*** funding to hire professional interpreters or provide printed translated resources (as opposed to online materials).

Discussion

- Disparities, challenges and barriers faced by racially and ethnically diverse communities in emergencies are not new; however they are deeply rooted in complexities that require specific attention and tailored strategies.

- While in California, many promising efforts over the past couple of decades have emerged to address the needs of diverse communities in emergencies, a large percentage remain focused on “more of the same”.
 - ▣ E.g., Large majority of agencies ONLY develop and provide translated materials to meet the needs of their diverse communities.

Discussion

- Where promising practices and strategies exist, they are fragmented and implemented only by a few organizations.
 - ▣ E.g., Conducting community needs assessments; involving community members in local preparedness planning and implementation
- Efforts also remain largely concentrated in densely populated areas across the state (e.g., Bay Area and Los Angeles).
- Few efforts are being made to integrate principles of cultural and linguistic competence (that have proven to be successful in reducing disparities in health care) in planning and implementation.
 - ▣ E.g., cultural competence training for first responders and service providers, onsite interpreters, diversity in the workforce

Directions and Questions for Future Consideration

- Coordination of information, resources and services across organizations, sectors and regions.
- Infrastructure support for developing culturally and linguistically appropriate programs and services.
- Collaboration between Public Health/Emergency Management agencies and local community to foster trust and understanding.
- Tailoring emergency preparedness plans and actions to the broader social, economic and political circumstances of communities.
- Increasing funding and allowing for greater flexibility in allocation of funds.

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NATURAL DISASTERS SO
DEVASTATING THAT ONLY
THE RICH AND POWERFUL
WILL SURVIVE...



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