

Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness

SUCCESS STORY

BAY AREA

Leaders of Leaders Unite

Contributors: Sandra Williams, Howard Backer & Peter Ohtaki

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California's Bay Area is rich in organizations committed to better preparing its community for disaster. Following the June 2010 California state-level Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness and the February 2011 Bay Area Summit, local leaders reflected on the outcomes of the Summits and identified areas needing improvement. Sandra Williams, the Emergency Operations Center and Safety Officer for Alameda County Medical Center, who was instrumental in the planning of both Summits, stated that "we [the planning team] recognized that there were many organizations trying to build resiliency in the Bay Area. We needed to look at who they were, who their partners were, who the leaders were, and how we could bring these groups together."

The "Leaders of Leaders" Kick-off After the Summit

Williams, working with a team of partners that represented business, government, and non-profit organizations, planned a follow-up meeting for September 2011 dubbed the "Leaders of Leaders" meeting. This meeting was designed to unite the leadership of organizations who have similar missions of community preparedness, emergency response, resiliency, and cross-sector collaboration for the purpose of networking, sharing ideas, and enhancing existing collaborations.

Shifting the Focus Created Better Understanding

The meeting focused on identifying preparedness planning and communication "Gaps, Gives, and Gets". The "Gaps, Gives, and Gets" approach, which was originally introduced at the Summit, proved very effective. As Howard Backer, Director of the California Emergency Medical Services Authority explained, "one value Meta-Leadership added was the 'Gaps, Gives, and Gets' session. We had been focusing on and rehashing the 'Gaps' for years, but hearing the 'Gives' and 'Gets' from our cross-sector partners added a new dimension." Additionally, the September meeting provided another opportunity to bring together business, non-profit, and government leaders to learn about one another's roles and responsibilities. Peter Ohtaki, Executive Director of the California Resilience Alliance, credits the Summit for bringing the three sectors together, and especially for including non-profit organizations in the discussion. Ohtaki explained that the Summit allowed for business to network with non-profits, and the September meeting allowed for each party to gain an in-depth understanding of how each organization fits into the preparedness puzzle. Ohtaki explained that both the Summit and September meeting "helped promote a resource-sharing discussion between business, non-profit, and government which will help build a stronger capacity for community response."



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Opportunities to move forward

Moving forward, Bay Area leaders hope to capitalize on outcomes from the September meeting. Creating a joint calendar among participating organizations, dedicating a shared website or database to building a repository of resources, and working on additional special projects focusing on continuity of operations planning, communications, and technology are all ideas that have been proposed. Additionally, the group reconvened in December 2011 for the official CDC Meta-Leadership Post Summit Meeting, which focused on better communication among sectors, the use of technology and more specifically social media during an emergency, and the American Red Cross' Ready Neighborhoods Initiative.

The Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness empowered business, government and nonprofit leaders to act together in times of crisis. The five-year initiative connected 5,000 business, government and nonprofit leaders in 36 communities. For resources and more information about Meta-Leadership visit the [CDC Foundation Meta-Leadership Website](#).



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