

Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness

SUCCESS STORY

ILLINOIS

Meta-leadership: Beyond Preparedness

Contributor: Gaston Armour

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When asked about his experience attending the Illinois Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness, which was held in April 2009, Gaston Armour said, “I understood situational leadership from graduate school, but the Summit gave me a whole new idea of how we should conduct business. I was at a crossroads of looking at how our systems were working together – or not. Meta-Leadership made me more aware of the importance to collaborate and leverage resources beyond my own agency.”

Fostering community-based solutions to a wide range of problems

As a result, Armour sought deeper relationships with sister agencies, and assigned liaisons to the Departments of Health and Aging to support collaboration. Their combined efforts have led to the development of the Community Resilience Initiative (CRI), which is a program designed to restore a sense of community across the state of Illinois by fostering community-based solutions to a wide range of problems. Problems include the lack of access to healthy, locally grown food and the impact adverse childhood experience can have on a community. The CRI focuses on engaging community stakeholders in solving core problems, building capacity for collaborative work, and achieving measurable results - rather than direct service provision. The CRI brings different parts of the community together to share common goals to work together in order to leverage limited resources.

Armour is excited to be in a leadership role with this new initiative. “We’ve gone from a culture of need to know,” he says, “to one of need to share. Meta-Leadership is the cornerstone of this approach.”

*Gaston Armour is the Statewide Emergency Preparedness and Wellness Coordinator for the Illinois Department of Human Services.

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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