

Preparing our neighborhoods through  
effective management of Community Emergency  
Response Teams (CERT):

Goals and Groundwork

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PHASE Project  
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# CERT Mission

- To empower citizens through education, training, and outreach, to prepare themselves, their families, and their communities for natural and man-made disasters

# CERT Background

- Developed by Los Angeles City Fire Department in 1985
- Based on concept that official resources will be overwhelmed following a major disaster, assistance will need to come from community members
- FEMA adopted the model in 1993
- Citizen Corps founded in 2002 and moved CERT under its umbrella

# CERT Training Topics

- Fire safety
- Disaster medical operations
- Light search and rescue
- CERT organization
- Disaster psychology
- CERTs and terrorism

# Baltimore CERT Organization

- Led by the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management (MOEM)
- MOEM works with community organizations and individual citizens to educate the public about disasters, their consequences, and how to prepare
- Organized into neighborhood teams

# Baltimore CERT Status

## Oct. 2010

- Strong push after 2002 to train people and prepare communities
- Roster of over 500 individuals who had taken the CERT class, 30 teams, and 32 team leaders
- Lower priority starting 2008

# Baltimore CERT Status

## Oct. 2010

- From 2005 to 2009, five different people were responsible for CERT
- 2009 attempt to decentralize management led to Battalion Representative system
- No classes in 2010

# PHASE Intern Goals

- Revitalize and reorganize program
- Research best practices for CERT
- Plan, organize, and attend a CERT training
- Facilitate and increase communication with CERT teams
- Assist with community outreach

# PHASE Intern Goals

- Update the website
- Research legal issues regarding CERT
- Create CERT IDs
- Organize existing information about Baltimore CERT
- Develop standard operating procedures (SOP)

# Initial Steps

- Interviewed MOEM Battalion Reps to find status of their teams
- Open communication with team leaders
- Fewer responses than expected
- Only 8 teams still active
- Members did not know about battalion system
- Survey of those still involved

# Survey Results

- Team leaders mostly used email to communicate with each other and team members
- Teams that were active were very active
- Wanted to be involved
- Most desired: preparedness outreach within their community and at events
- Even expressed willingness to fundraise!

# Organization and Best Practices

- Combed files to centralize and update rosters, class information, etc.
- Interviewed Scott Brillman, employee at MOEM who is a CERT instructor and was most recently in charge of CERT
- Contacted Montgomery County CERT, attended their training
- Interviewed LA County CERT veteran

# Legal Issues

- Background check is desirable but unnecessary – resources not available
- Background check only necessary if CERT staffs a shelter
- Participant waivers created and checked by city's legal department

# New Website Launched

- Web-based opt-in Volunteer Management System
- Event Calendar



# Website Capabilities

- Activation
- Newsletter
- Group Messaging
- Map of members and teams
- Created SOPs for future web admins

